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THE CANTERBURY TALES.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY,
PAUL'S WORKS.

THE
CANTERBURY TALES
OR
CHAUCER.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,
AN ESSAY ON HIS LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION,
AND AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE, TOGETHER WITH
NOTES AND A GLOSSARY.

BY
THOMAS TYRWHITT, F.R.S.

With Memoir and Critical Dissertation,
BY THE
REV. GEORGE GILFILLAN.

IN THREE VOL.

VOL. I.

EDINBURGH: JAMES NICHOL.
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ADVERTISEMENT.

IN modernising the text of Chaucer's "Canterbury Tales," the plan adopted by Mr Charles Cowden Clarke, in his "Riches of Chaucer," has been followed as closely as possible—Mr Clarke, in the kindest manner, having allowed the publisher to make use of his text, so far as the portions of these celebrated Tales formed part of "The Riches of Chaucer."

The Glossary has been placed on the margin, as in the case of Spenser's Works. Where the measure requires that *e* final should be pronounced, as it was in Chaucer's time, it is marked thus—ë, as in "firstë," for *first*, "whennë," for *when*. The sign over the *e* indicates that the word requires to be pronounced as two syllables—thus, "first-e," "when-ne." In consequence of the difference of opinion which exists regarding the accentuation of Chaucer, the accent has been used as sparingly as possible.

Unlike the text of Spenser, that of Chaucer cannot be remodelled, without affecting the integrity of the text, so as to afford the same facility of perusal as a modern publication; but few intelligent readers will be at a loss to follow the author readily, with the helps which this Edition affords.

It is believed that every Editor or Publisher engaged in an Edition of Chaucer has felt a strong desire to delete or alter certain passages, which, from their grossness, are offensive; but

the reader of "The Canterbury Tales" will not fail to remember the rudeness of speech and manners which characterised Chaucer's times, of which these passages are so remarkable an illustration; and it can safely be urged, as a palliation of them, that they are far less vicious than many portions of more modern authors, whose licentious allusions are without the same excuse.

The text will be found entire; and, to give the Edition a greater value, the Dissertations and Notes of Tyrwhitt, which have always been regarded as a masterpiece of research and scholarship, are added in full. The portion of the notes pertaining to each volume will be given with it, instead of, as usual, placing them all together at the end of the work.

Should this Edition of "The Canterbury Tales" prove as acceptable as Spenser's Works have been, the exertions made to render these two great works a charm to the ordinary reader, as they have ever been to the more erudite portion of the community, will be amply recompensed.

The Life of Chaucer, by the Editor, will be given with Vol. II.; and a Dissertation on his Writings with Vol. III.

EDINBURGH, January 1860.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

IN 2 VOLS. QUARTO.—OXFORD 1798.

THE Delegates of the Clarendon Press having been applied to, that 'The Canterbury Tales' of Chaucer, as published by the late Mr Tyrwhitt, might be printed at Oxford more splendidly than had been done in the edition of them in his lifetime, they readily acceded to the proposal, both in compliance with the wishes expressed to them, and out of their own desire to shew every respect on the part of the University to Mr Tyrwhitt's name and abilities.

They gave directions, therefore, that the work should be undertaken without delay; and, as they had recently done in their publication of the 'Poetics' of Aristotle, with Notes by the same learned person, that the execution of it should be conducted with every attention to correctness and elegance. But there occurred at the same time another circumstance also, in the advantage of which to the present edition of 'The Canterbury Tales' the public is more interested. The nephew and executor of the Editor made an offer in the handsomest manner to the Delegates, of a copy of the work which Mr Tyrwhitt had reserved for his own use, and in which it was found that he had inserted several emendations and additions, having revised the punctuation and orthography of the 'Tales' themselves, (though in this he seemed to have proceeded no further than 'The Manciple's Tale,') and in other parts of the work having written some things otherwise than as he first gave them to the world.

It is according to such corrections therefore that the work is

now printed, as it is unquestionable, also, that by the adoption of them it has a new value affixed to it. For notwithstanding that the corrections alluded to are not numerous, wherever they occur, they are the more deliberate opinions of the Editor himself; and nothing, it is to be presumed, will be thought unimportant which Mr Tyrwhitt conceived to be a further elucidation of his Author, or a more just decision upon any point of literature than that in which he had before acquiesced.

It seems unnecessary to add more, except that in the present Edition the errors of the preceding one have been diligently corrected; that the Notes upon 'The Canterbury Tales' have been incorporated, so far as could be done with convenience; and that the same method has been taken with the Glossary,* the words, of which the explanation stood before in the Supplement, having been inserted in the first alphabet in their due place and order.

DELEGATES' ROOM,
March 30, 1798.

* In our edition, this Glossary is embodied in the Marginal Glossary.—
ED. N. E.

THE PREFACE.

THE first object of this publication was to give the text of 'The Canterbury Tales' as correct as the MSS. within the reach of the Editor would enable him to make it.

The account of former Editions, in the Appendix to this Preface (A), will shew that this object had hitherto been either entirely neglected, or at least very imperfectly pursued. The Editor therefore has proceeded as if his Author had never been published before. He has formed the text throughout from the MSS., and has paid little regard to the readings of any edition, except the two by Caxton, each of which may now be considered as a manuscript. A list of the MSS. collated, or consulted, upon this occasion is subjoined (B).

In order to make the proper use of these MSS., to unravel the confusions of their orthography, and to judge between a great number of various readings, it was necessary to inquire into the state of our language and versification at the time when Chaucer wrote, and also, as much as was possible, into the peculiarities of his style and manner of composition. Nor was it less necessary to examine, with some attention, the work now intended to be republished; to draw a line between the imperfections which may be supposed to have been left in it by the Author, and those which have crept into it since; to distinguish the parts where the Author appears as an inventor, from those where he is merely a translator or imitator; and throughout the whole to trace his allusions to a variety of forgotten books and obsolete customs. As a certain degree of information upon all these points will be found to be necessary even for the reading of 'The Canterbury

Tales' with intelligence and satisfaction, the Editor hopes he shall be excused for supposing that the majority of his readers will not be displeased with his attempt to shorten, at least, the labour of their inquiries, by laying before them such parts of the result of his own researches as he judges will be most conducive to that purpose. He has, therefore, added to the text, 1. An *Essay** on the Language and Versification of Chaucer; 2. An Introductory Discourse to 'The Canterbury Tales,' and, 3. Notes, into which he has thrown an account of the most material various readings; illustrations of particular passages; and explanations of the most uncommon words and phrases, especially such as are omitted, or ill explained, in the Glossary to Urry's Edition.

He had once an intention of adding a Glossary,† and a Life of Chaucer. From the former of these undertakings he was deterred by the bulk to which this publication had already swollen, and by the consideration that a Glossary, adapted to a part only of Chaucer's writings, must necessarily be a very imperfect work, the utility of which would by no means be proportionable to the labour employed in compiling it. If this attempt to invite the attention of the public to their too much neglected bard, should so far succeed as to bring to light any MSS., by the help of which, together with those in the Bodleian and other Libraries, the remainder of the writings of Chaucer might be restored to a tolerable degree of purity, a good Glossary to the whole would be a most useful work, and, indeed, would answer all the purposes of a Dictionary of our ancient language.

With respect to a life of Chaucer, he found, after a reasonable

* In this *Essay*, part the third, § 1–6, is contained a short view of English Poetry to the time of Chaucer, the trouble of compiling which the Editor might perhaps have saved himself, if he had foreseen that Mr Warton's 'History of English Poetry' would have appeared so soon. Both the *Essay* and the Introductory Discourse were printed before Mr Warton's book was published; which is mentioned, not so much to obviate any suspicion of plagiarism, as to apologise for whatever defects there may be in either of those treatises, from a want of the lights which that learned and elegant writer has thrown upon all parts of this subject.

† [This intention the learned Editor afterwards carried into execution, and published a Glossary in 1778.]

waste of time and pains in searching for materials, that he could add few facts to those which have already appeared in several lives of that poet; and he was not disposed either to repeat the comments and inventions by which former biographers have endeavoured to supply the deficiency of facts, or to substitute any of his own for the same laudable purpose. Instead, therefore, of a formal life of his Author, which, upon these principles, must have been a very meagre narration, he has added to this Preface (c) a short Abstract of the Historical Passages of the Life of Chancer, with remarks, which may serve to separate for the future those passages from others, which have nothing to recommend them to credit but the single circumstance of having been often repeated.

He will detain the reader no longer than just to observe, that in the following edition of 'The Canterbury Tales,' he does not recollect to have deviated from the MSS. (except, perhaps, by adding the final *n* to a very few words) in any one instance of which the reader is not advertised in the notes.

APPENDIX TO THE PREFACE.

(A)—AN ACCOUNT OF FORMER EDITIONS OF ‘THE CANTERBURY TALES.’

THE art of printing had been invented and exercised for a considerable time, in most countries of Europe, before the art of criticism was called in to superintend and direct its operations. It is therefore much more to the honour of our meritorious countryman, William Caxton, that he chose to make ‘The Canterbury Tales’ one of the earliest productions of his press, than it can be to his discredit that he printed them very incorrectly. He probably took the first MS. that he could procure to print from, and it happened unluckily to be one of the worst, in all respects, that he could possibly have met with. The very few copies of this edition, which are now remaining,* have no date, but Mr Ames supposes it to have been printed in 1475 or 1476.

It is still more to the honour of Caxton, that, when he was informed of the imperfections of his Edition, he very readily undertook a second, ‘for to satisfy the Author,’ (as he says himself,) ‘whereas tofore by ignorance *he* had erred in hurting and diffaming his book.’ His whole account of this matter, in the Preface to this second Edition, is so clear and ingenuous, that I shall insert it

* The late Mr West was so obliging as to lend me a complete copy of this edition, which is now, as I have heard, in the King’s Library. There is another complete copy in the Library of Merton College, which is illuminated, and has a ruled line under every printed one, to give it the appearance, I suppose, of a MS. Neither of these books, though seemingly complete, has any Preface or Advertisement.

below in his own words.* This Edition is also without date, except that the Preface informs us that it was printed six years after the first.

Ames mentions an Edition of Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales,' 'Collected by William Caxton, and printed by Wynken de Worde at Westmestre, 1495, Folio.' He does not appear to have seen it himself, nor have I ever met with any other authority for its existence; which, however, I do not mean to dispute. If there was such an Edition, we may be tolerably sure that it was only a copy of Caxton's.

* Pref. to Caxton's 2d Edit., from a copy in the Library of St John's Coll., Oxford. 'Ames,' p. 55 :—'Whiche book I have dylygently oversen, and duly examyned, to the ende that it be made accordyng unto his owen makynge; for I fynde many of the sayd booke, whiche wryters have abrydgdyd it, and many thynges left out, and in some places have sette certayn versys that he never made ne sette in hys booke; of whyche booke so incorrecte was one broughte to me vi. yere passyd, whiche I supposed had ben veray true and correcte, and accordyng to the same I dyde do enprynte a certayn nomber of them, whiche anon were sold to many and dyverse gentylmen, of whom one gentylman cam to me, and sayd that this book was not according in many places unto the book that Gefferey Chaucer had made. To whom I answered, that I had made it accordyng to my copye, and by me was nothyng added ne mynusshyd. Thenne he sayd, he knewe a book whyche hys fader had and moche lovyd, that was very trewe, and accordyng unto hys owen first book by hym made; and sayd more, yf I wold enprynte it agayn, he wold gete me the same book for a copye. How be it he wyst well that hys fader wold not gladly departe fro it. To whom I said, in caas that he coude gete me suche a book, trewe and correcte, yet I wold ones endevoyre me to enprynte it agayn, for to satisfy the auctour, where as tofore by ygnoraunce I erryd in hurtyng and dyffamynge his book in dyverce places, in setting in somme thynges that he never sayd ne made, and leving out many thynges that he made, whyche ben requysite to be sette in it. And thus we fyll at accord, and he full gentilly gate of hys fader the said book, and delyvered it to me, by whyche I have corrected my book, as heere after alle alonge by the ayde of Almighty God shal folowe, whom I humbly beseche,' &c.

Mr Lewis, in his 'Life of Caxton,' p. 104, has published a minute account of the contents of this edition from a copy in the Library of Magdalen College, Cambridge, but without deciding whether it is the first or the second edition.

It is undoubtedly the second; but the Preface is lost. There is an imperfect copy of this edition in the Museum, and another in the Library of the Royal Society. Both together would not make a complete one.

This was certainly the case of both Pynson's Editions. He has prefixed to both the introductory part of Caxton's Prohemye to his 2d Edition, without the least alteration. In what follows, he says that he purposes to imprint his book [in the first edition] by a copy of the said Master Caxton, and [in the second] by a copy of William Caxton's imprinting.* That the copy mentioned in both these passages, by which Pynson purposed to imprint, was really Caxton's second edition, is evident from the slightest comparison of the three books. Pynson's first edition has no date, but is supposed (upon good grounds, I think,) to have been printed not long after 1491, the year of Caxton's death. His second Edition† is dated in 1526, and was the first in which a collection of some other pieces of Chaucer was added to 'The Canterbury Tales.'

The next edition which I have been able to meet with was printed by Thomas Godfray in 1532. If this be not the very Edition which Leland speaks of‡ as printed by Berthelette, with

* See the Prohemies to Pynson's 1st and 2d Edit., in the Preface to Urry's 'Chaucer.' There is a complete copy of Pynson's 1st Edit. in the Library of the Royal Society.

+ I venture to call this Pynson's 2d Edit., though Ames (from some notes of Bagford) speaks of Editions in 1520 and 1522. He does not appear to have seen them himself. Mr West had a copy of the edition of 1526, in which the name of the printer and the date of the impression are regularly set down at the end of 'The Canterbury Tales.' After that follow 'Troilus and Creseide' and 'The Boke of Fame,' at the end of which last is a note, copied from Caxton's edition of the same book, with this addition:—'And here foloweth another of his workes.' But in Mr West's copy nothing followed. The writer of the Preface to Ed. Urr. seems to have had the use of a copy of this Edition in 1526, which contained some other pieces of Chaucer's, and several by other hands. See the Pref. to Ed. Urr.

‡ I think it necessary to state Leland's account of the editions of Chaucer in his own words, from Tanner's 'Bibl. Brit.' v. Chaucer.—'Non alienum meo erit instituto palam facere, Gulielmum Caxodunum, hominem nec indiligentem nec indoctum, et quem constat primum Londini artem exercuisse typographicam, Chauceri opera, quotquot vel pretio vel precibus comparare potuit, in unum volumen collegisse. Vicit tamen Caxodunicam editionem Bertholetus noster opera Gulielmi Thynni, qui multo labore, sedulitate, ac curâ usus in perquirendis vetustis exemplaribus, multa primæ adjectit editioni. Sed nec in hac parte caruit Brianus Tuoca, mihi

the assistance of Mr William Thynne, (as I rather suspect it is,) we may be assured that it was copied from that. Mr Thynne's

'familiaritate conjunctissimus, et Anglicæ linguae eloquentia mirificus, sua gloria, edita in postremam impressionem præfatione elimata, luculentæ, eleganti. Seqvar igitur codicem paucis abhinc annis impressum, et proximum adponam syllabon.' He then gives a syllabus of the works of Chaucer, contained in that edition, as follows :—“ Fabulæ Cantianæ,” xxiv., quarum duas solutæ oratione scriptæ; sed “ Petri Aratoris Fabula,” quæ communi doctorum consensu Chaucero, tanquam vero parenti, attribuitur, in utræque editione, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, suppressa est. De arte amandi, alias “ Romaunce of the Rose,” &c.'

Before I make any remarks upon this account, I must observe that it was drawn up by Leland before the year 1540. This appears from his ‘New Year's Gift to Henry VIII. in the xxxvii. yeare of his raygne,’ (1 Jan. 1546,) in which he says expressly that he had spent the last six years in travelling about the kingdom, ‘all his other occupations intermitted,’ [Ed. 1745, p. xxii., prefixed to ‘Leland's Itin.’ v. i.] so that his book ‘De Viris Illustribus,’ which he speaks of as finished in the same piece, p. xxi., must have been finished before he set out upon his travels. I will observe, too, by the way, that the biographers of Leland seem to have confounded these last six years' travels with his former travels, in execution of the Commission granted to him by Henry VIII. to ‘serche the Libraries of Monasteries, Colleges,’ &c. That Commission was granted in the year 1533, 25 H. VIII., but how many years he spent in the execution of it there is no authority, that I can find, for determining with precision.

In the account above quoted, Leland is certainly mistaken in saying that Carton collected the works of Chaucer into one volume. He printed two editions of ‘The Canterbury Tales’ by themselves, as has been shewn above. He also printed ‘Boethius,’ ‘Troilus and Cressida,’ and the ‘Boke of Fame;’ but each in a separate volume; and some smaller pieces of Chaucer, intermixed with several of Lydgate, &c., in another volume, of which the contents may be seen in ‘Middleton's Dissert,’ p. 263, n., [d.]; but it does not appear that he ever attempted to collect these separate publications into one volume.

Leland is also inaccurate, at least, in representing the edition by Thynne as coming next after that by Carton, without taking any notice of the intermediate editions by Pynson, and especially that in 1526, in which an attempt was really made to collect the works of Chaucer into one volume.

It may appear presumptuous to go further, and to charge him with inaccuracy in his description of that very edition by Thynne, which he seems to have had before his eyes, but I am much inclined to suspect, (as I have intimated in the text,) that the edition which he speaks of as printed by Berthelette was really printed by Godfray, and that the Preface

Dedication to Henry VIII. stands at the head of it; and the great number of Chaucer's works, never before published, which

of Brianus Tucca, (Sir Brian Tuke,) which he commends so much, was nothing else but the Prefatory Address, or Dedication, to the King, which is prefixed to Godfray's and other later editions in the name of Mr William Thynne. The mistake may not have been so extravagant as it appears to be at first. It is possible that Berthelette might be concerned in putting forth the edition of 1532, though it was printed by Godfray; and it is very probable that the Dedication, (which is in such a style as I think very likely to be commended by Leland,) though standing in the name of Mr William Thynne, was composed for him by Sir Brian Tuke. Mr Thynne himself, I apprehend, was rather a lover, than a master, of these studies.

In support of this suspicion I observe, 1. That the syllabus, which Leland has given of the contents of Berthelette's edition, agrees exactly enough with the contents of the edition by Godfray, a few small pieces only being omitted by him. 2. The date of Godfray's Edition in 1532 agrees perfectly with what Leland says of the edition in question, (viz., that it was printed a few years before,) and with the probable date of Mr Thynne's edition, which appears to have been published not earlier than 1530, and certainly not later than 1532. It was not published earlier than 1530, because 'the French Grammar made by an Englishman,' mentioned in the Dedication, must mean, in all probability, 'L'Esclaircissement de la Langue Françoise,' by John Palsgrave, the printing of which was finished by John Hawkins, xviii. July 1530, and the Privilege granted on the 2d September following. It was not later than 1532, because the Dedication appears in Godfray's edition of that year. 3. If Berthelette had printed Mr Thynne's edition in 1531, (we will suppose,) it is inconceivable that Godfray should set about another edition so immediately as to be able to publish it the very next year. Though the printers of that age had a very imperfect notion, I apprehend, of copyright at common law, they may be presumed to have had always a certain common sense, which would restrain them from undertaking a new impression of a book, while a considerable number of copies of a former impression remained unsold, whether those copies belonged to themselves or to others. Besides, Godfray's edition has no appearance of a hasty, piratical impression. It is upon a fine paper, and the types and press-work are remarkably neat and elegant. 4. I think we have Berthelette's own authority for believing that he did not print Mr Thynne's edition of Chaucer. In the Preface to Gower's 'Confessio Amantis,' which he published in this very year 1532, after having mentioned 'Troylus and Cresseide,' he goes on thus:—'The whiche noble warke, and many other of the sayde Chausers that never were before imprinted, and those that very fewe men knewe and fewer hadde them, be now of late put forthe together in a fayre volume.' There can be no doubt that in this passage he refers to Mr Thynne's edition, and if he had

appear in it, fully entitles it to the commendations which have always been given to Mr Thynne's edition on that account.

printed it himself, I think he would certainly have claimed the honour of it. At the same time, the favourable manner in which he speaks of it would lead one to imagine, (as has been suggested above,) that he had some concern in it.

Upon the whole, therefore, I am persuaded that the edition by Godfray in 1532 is the edition which Leland speaks of as printed by Berthelette. I have given above what I conjecture to have been the probable grounds of his mistake. But, indeed, when we recollect the hurry in which this work of Leland must have been compiled, and that it was left by him unfinished, we need not seek for any other causes of the inaccuracies with which it abounds. In the latter part of the passage cited above, he speaks of 'The Ploughman's Tale' by the title of 'Petri Aratoris Fabula,' confounding it, in the title at least, with 'Pieroe Ploughman's Visions.' For I do not suppose that he meant to attribute the 'Visions' to Chaucer, though, in fact, the one might as well be attributed to him as the other.

Notwithstanding the immoderate length of this note, I must not suppress another testimony which may be produced in favour of the existence of an edition of Chaucer by Mr Thynne distinct from that printed by Godfray. Mr Speght, in his 'Life of Chaucer,' has the following passage:—'M. William Thynn in his first printed booke of Chaucer's works with one columbe on a side, had a tale called the Pilgrim's Tale, which was more odious to the clergie, than the speach of the plowman. The tale began thus: "In Lincolneshire fast by a fenne: Standeth a religious house who doth it kenne." The argument of which tale, as also the occasion thereof, and the cause why it was left out of Chaucer's works, shall hereafter be shewed, if God permit, in M. Fran. Thyn's coment upon Chaucer: and the tale it selfe published if possibly it can be found.'

It must be allowed that this description of Mr Thynne's first edition, 'with one columbe on a side, and a tale called the Pilgrim's Tale,' does not suit the edition printed by Godfray, which is in two columns, and has no 'Pilgrim's Tale.' But I observe that Mr Speght does not pretend to have seen this book. He even doubts whether the tale can be found. If, therefore, I should be able to prove that the tale which he speaks of could not possibly be in Mr Thynne's first edition, I presume no great stress will be laid upon the other part of his evidence in which he supposes that edition to have been printed with only one column on a side.

It appears very strange, at first sight, that the 'Plowman's Tale' (according to Leland) should have been suppressed in Mr Thynne's edition, quia malos sacerdotum mores vehementer increpavit, and that he should have inserted this 'Pilgrim's Tale,' which, as Mr Speght tells us, was still 'more odious to the clergie.' A few years after, when the Reformation was further advanced, in 1542, the 'Plowman's Tale' is inserted among

Accordingly, it was several times reprinted as the standard edition of Chaucer's works, without any material alteration,

Chaucer's works, and the 'Pilgrim's Tale' is suppressed! But there is no occasion to insist upon these little improbabilities. Though Mr Speght did not know where to find the 'Pilgrim's Tale,' and the printer of the edit. in 1687 assures us that he had searched for it 'in the public libraries of both Universities,' and also 'in all private libraries that he could have access unto,' I have had the good fortune to meet with a copy.* It is entitled 'The Pylgrymse Tale,' and begins thus:—

‘In Lincolneshyr fast by the fene
Ther stant an hows and you yt keu,
And callyd sempynham of religion,
And is of an old foundation,’ &c.

There can be no doubt, I think, that this is the piece of which Mr Speght had received some confused intelligence. It seems to have been mentioned by Bale among Chaucer's works in the following manner:—‘Narrationes Diversorum, lib. i. In comitatu Lincolnensi fuit’—‘Script. Brit.’ p. 526, ed. 1559. But it is impossible that any one who had read it should ascribe it to Chaucer. He is quoted in it twice by name, fol. xxxiii. and fol. xlvi., and in the latter place the reference seems to be made to a printed book. The reader shall judge:—

‘He sayd he durst not it disclose,
But bad me reyd the Romant of the Rose,
The thred leafe just from the end,
To the secund page ther he did me send,
He prayd me thes vi. stavis for to marke,
Whiche be Chaucer's awn hand wark.
¶ Thus moche woll our boke sygnify
That while Peter hath mastery,’ &c.

[Then follow four more lines from Chaucer's R. R. v. 7263–8. Ed. Urr.] It is not usual, at least, to cite MSS. by the leaf and the page. But if this citation was really made from a printed book, 'The Pilgrim's Tale' must have been written after Mr Thynne's Edition, for Chaucer's translation of the 'Romant of the Rose' was first printed in that edition. An-

* The copy of which I speak is in the black letter, and seems to have once made part of a volume of miscellaneous poems in 8vo. The first leaf is numbered xxxi., and the last xlvi. 'The Pilgrim's Tale' begins about the middle of fol. xxxi. vers., and continues to the end of the fragment, where it breaks off imperfect. The first leaf has a running title—'Venus, The Court of'—and contains the ten last lines of one poem, and another whole poem of twenty lines, before 'The Pilgrim's Tale.'

This curious fragment was purchased at the auction of Mr West's library, in a lot (No. * 1040) of 'Sundry fragments of old black-letter books,' by Mr Herbert of Gulston's Square, who very obligingly permitted me to examine it.

except the insertion of 'The Plowman's Tale' in 1542, of which I have spoken in the Discourse, &c. n. 32.

As my business here is solely with 'The Canterbury Tales,' I shall take no notice of the several miscellaneous pieces, by Chaucer and others, which were added to them by Mr Thynne in his Edition, and afterwards by Stowe and Speght in the Editions of 1561, 1597, and 1602. With respect to 'The Canterbury Tales,' I am under the necessity of observing that, upon the whole, they received no advantage from the Edition of 1532. Its material variations from Caxton's Second Edition are all, I think, for the worse. It confounds the order of the Squire's* and the Franklin's† tales, which Caxton, in his second Edition, had set right. It gives the Franklin's Prologue to the Merchant, in addition to his own proper Prologue.‡ It produces for the first time two Prologues, the one to the Doctor's, and the other to the 'Shipman's Tale,' which are both evidently spurious;§ and it brings back the lines of ribaldry || in the 'Merchant's Tale,' which Caxton, in his second Edition, had rejected upon the authority of his good MS.

However, this Edition of 1532, with all its imperfections, had the luck, as I have said, to be considered as the standard Edition, and to be copied, not only by the booksellers, in their several

other passage will fix the date of this composition still more clearly. In fol. xxxix. xl. are the following lines:—

‘Perkin werbeck and Jak straw
And now of late our cobler the dawe.’

One would not expect to find any mention of Perkin Warbeck in a work attributed to Chaucer; but, passing that over, I think it is plain that 'our cobler,' in the second line, means the leader of the Lincolnshire rebels in 1536, who, as Hollinshed tells us, p. 941, 'called himself "Captaine Cobler," but was indeed a monk named Doctor Mackarell.' 'The Pilgrim's Tale,' therefore, was not written till after 1536, and consequently could not possibly be in Mr Thynne's first edition, which, as has been shewn above, was printed, at latest, in 1532.

* See the Discourse, &c., § xxiii., and Note on ver. 10,293.

† See the Discourse, &c., § xxv., and Note on ver. 10,985.

‡ See the same Section and Note.

§ See them in all the Edits. since 1532.

|| See the Note on ver. 10,227. The lines themselves are in all the common edita.

Editions* of 1542, 1546, 1555, and 1561, but also by Mr Speght, (the first Editor in form, after Mr Thynne, who set his name to his work,) in 1597 and 1602. In the Dedication to Sir Robert Cecil, prefixed to this last edition, he speaks, indeed, of having ‘reformed the whole work, both by old written copies and by Ma. William Thynne’s praiseworthy labours,’ but I cannot find that he has departed in any material point from those Editions, which I have supposed to be derived from Mr Thynne’s. In the very material points above mentioned, in which those Editions vary from Caxton’s second, he has followed them. Nor have I observed any such verbal varieties as would induce one to believe that he had consulted any good MS. They who have read his preface will probably not regret that he did not do more towards correcting the text of Chaucer.

In this state ‘The Canterbury Tales’ remained † till the Edition undertaken by Mr Urry, which was published, some years after his death, in 1721. I shall say but little of that Edition, as a very fair and full account of it is to be seen in the modest and sensible Preface prefixed to it by Mr Timothy

* There are some other Editions mentioned by Ames without date, but it is probable that, upon inspection, they would appear to be one or other of the Editions whose dates are here given. It seems to have been usual to print books in partnership, and for each partner to print his own name to his share of the impression. See Ames, p. 252. A Bible is said to be printed in 1551 by Nicholas Hill, ‘at the cost and charges of certayne honest menne of the occupacyon, whose names be upon their bokeas.’

† It may be proper just to take notice that Mr Speght’s Edition was reprinted in 1687, with an advertisement at the end, in which the Editor pretended to publish from a MS. the conclusion of ‘The Coke’s Tale,’ and also of ‘The Squire’s Tale’ which in the printed books are said to be lost or never finished by the author. These conclusions may be seen in the preface to Ed. Urr. Whoever the Editor was, I must do him the justice to say that they are both really to be found in MS. The first is in MS. B. a. and the other in MS. B. 8. from which Hearne has also printed it, as a choice discovery, in his letter to Bagford. App. to R. G. p. 601. If I thought the reader had any relish for such supplements to Chaucer, I could treat him from MS. B. a. with at least thirty more lines, which have been inserted in different parts of ‘The Cook’s Tale,’ by the same hand that wrote this conclusion. It seems to have been an early, though very unsuccessful, attempt to supply the deficiencies of that tale, before any one had thought of tacking ‘Gamelyn’ to it.

Thomas,* upon whom the charge of publishing Chaucer devolved, or rather was imposed, after Mr Urry's death. The strange licence, in which Mr Urry appears to have indulged himself, of lengthening and shortening Chaucer's words according to his own fancy, and of even adding words of his own, without giving his readers the least notice, has made the text of Chaucer in his Edition by far the worst that was ever published.

Since this there has been no complete Edition of 'The Canterbury Tales.' A volume in 8vo containing the 'Prologue' and 'The Knight's Tale,' with large explanatory notes, &c., was published, in 1737, by a gentleman (as I am informed) who has since distinguished himself by many other learned and useful publications. He appears to have set out upon the only rational plan of publishing Chaucer, by collating the best MSS., and selecting from them the genuine readings, and accordingly his Edition, as far as it goes, is infinitely preferable to any of those which preceded it.

* I learn this from a MS. note in an interleaved copy of Urry's Chaucer, presented to the British Museum by Mr William Thomas, a brother, as I apprehend, of Mr T. Thomas. T. Thomas was of Christ-Church, Oxford, and died in 1751, aged lix. In another note Mr W. Thomas informs us that the 'Life of Chaucer,' in that edition, was very uncorrectly drawn up by Mr Dart, and corrected and enlarged by W. T. (*i.e.* himself.) The same Mr W. Thomas has taken a great deal of unnecessary pains in collating that copy of Urry's Edit. with several MSS. The best part of the various readings serves only to correct the arbitrary innovations which Mr Urry had introduced into the text. He has employed himself to better purpose upon the Glossary, where he has made many emendations and additions, which may be of considerable use, if ever a new Glossary to Chaucer shall be compiled.

(B)—A LIST OF MSS. COLLATED, OR CONSULTED, WITH THE
ABBREVIATIONS BY WHICH THEY ARE CITED.

IN THE MUSEUM.

- A. MS. Harl. 7335.
- B. MS. Reg. 18 C. ii. In Urry's list, vii.
- C. MS. Harl. 7334.
- D. MS. Reg. 17 D. xv. In Urry's list, viii.
- E. MS. Harl. 7333.
- F. MS. Harl. 1758. In Urry's list, i.
- G. MS. Sloane. A. 1685. xxii. D. In Urry's list, iii.
- H. MS. Sloane. A. 1686. xxii. D. In Urry's list, iv.
- I. MS. Harl. 1239. In Urry's list, ii.

AT OXFORD.

In the Bodleian Library.

- B. α . N^o. 2527, in the printed catalogue.
- B. β . N^o. 1234, ibid.
- B. γ . N^o. 1476, ibid.
- B. δ . N^o. 3360, ibid.
- B. ϵ . N^o. 4138, ibid.
- B. ζ . N^o. 6420, ibid.

N C A MS. in the Library of New College.

AT CAMBRIDGE.

- C. 1. In the Public Library. N^o. D. d. 4. 24.
- C. 2. Ibid. N^o. I. i. 3. 26.
- T. MS. in the Library of Trinity College, N^o. R. 3. 3.
- T t. Ibid. N^o. R. 3. 15.
- Ask. 1. 2. Two MSS. lent to me by the late Dr Askew. The second has in it the arms of Henry Deane, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1501–3.
- H A. A MS. lent to me by Edward Haistwell, Esq.

W. A MS. in the possession of the late Mr P. C. Webb.

Ch. N. Two MSS. described in the Pref. to Ed. Urr., the one as belonging to Charles Cholmondeley, Esq., of Vale Royal, in Cheshire, and the other to Mr Norton, of Southwick, in Hampshire. The Editor quotes them from the Collations of Mr W. Thomas, mentioned above in this App. A. note * p. xxiii.

Of these MSS., the most credit is certainly due to the five following, viz.—A., C., Ask. 1. 2, and H A. The four last exhibit the Tales in exactly the same order in which they are printed in this edition; and so does A., except that it wants the ‘Coke’s Tale’ [See the Discourse, &c., § xiii.], and has the ‘Nonne’s Tale’ inserted between the Sompnour’s and the Clerk’s. It is also, unluckily, very imperfect, beginning only at ver. 1204, and ending (with several intermediate breaks) at ver. 12610, in the ‘Pardoner’s Tale.’

N.B.—The Edits. of Chaucer by Caxton and Pynson are cited by these abbreviations:—Ca. 1. 2, Pyns. 1. 2. Sp. and Urr. are put for the Edit. by Speght and Urry. M. stands for the Edit. of the Prologue and Knight’s Tale in 1737. The other Edits. are cited by their respective dates. If no date is mentioned, the reference is to the Edit. of 1542 by John Reyne.

(c)—AN ABSTRACT OF THE HISTORICAL PASSAGES OF THE LIFE OF CHAUCER.

The birth of Chaucer in 1328 has been settled, I suppose, from some inscription on his tombstone, signifying that he died in 1400, at the age of 72. Of his birth itself we have no memorial, any more than of his parents.* He calls himself a Londenois, or Londoner, in the 'Testament of Love,' b. i. fol. 325; and in another passage, fol. 321, speaks of the city of London as the place of his 'engendrure.'

We are more in the dark about the place of his education. In his 'Court of Love,' ver. 912, he speaks of himself under the name and character of 'Philogenet—of Cambridge, Clerk.' This is by no means a decisive proof that he was really educated at Cambridge; but it may be admitted, I think, as a strong argument that he was not educated at Oxford; as Leland has supposed, without the shadow of a proof.† The biographers, however, instead of weighing one of these accounts against the other, have adopted both; and tell us very gravely, that he was first at Cambridge, and afterwards removed from thence to complete his studies at Oxford.

It were to be wished that Mr Speght had given us the date of that Record in the Inner Temple, (which, he says, a Mr Buckley had seen,) where 'Geffrey Chaucer was fined two

* Mr Speght has referred to several Records in which the name of Chaucer occurs. There is mention in the 'Monast. Ang.' vol. iii. p. 326, of a 'Johannes le Chauser, civis Londoniensis,' an. 1299, who may possibly have been our poet's grandfather. Though Leland says that he was *nobili loco natus*, Mr Speght informs us, that 'in the opinion of some heralds, he descended not of any great house, which they gather by his armes.' I am inclined to believe the heralds, rather than Leland.

The name of Chaucer is explained ['Life of Ch.', Urr.] to signify a 'shoemaker'; but it rather means *un faiseur de chausses ou culottiers*. ('Dict. de Lacombe,' v. Chaucier.) According to what is said to be the old spelling of it, 'Chaucesir,' it might be not improbably derived from 'Chaufecire,' an office which still subsists under the title of 'Chafewax.'

† The single circumstance by which Leland has endeavoured to strengthen his supposition that Chaucer was educated at Oxford, is another supposition that he was born in Oxfordshire or Berkshire. The latter has been shewn above to be false.

shillings for beating a Franciscane frier in Fleet Street.'* Leland has also told us that our author 'collegia Leguleiorum frequentavit after his travels in France, and perhaps before.' I must observe, that these travels in France rest entirely upon the authority of Leland, whose account is full of inconsistencies.

The first authentic memorial which we have of Chaucer, is the patent in Rymer, 41 E. III. by which that King grants to him an annuity of twenty marks, by the title of 'Valettus noster.'† He was then in the 39th year of his age. How long he had served the King in that, or any other station, and what particular

* Though this be but a blind story, it rather inclines me to believe that Chaucer was of the Inner Temple in the early part of his life, before he went into the service of Edward III. The circumstance recorded is plainly a youthful sally. On the contrary, Leland supposes his principal residence in the Inns of Court to have been after he had flourished in France, about the last years of Richard II.; which is totally incredible. Indeed Leland, through his whole account of our author, seems to have considered him as living at least twenty years later than he really did. He takes no notice of the best authenticated circumstances of Chaucer's life in the time of Edward III. and he represents him as highly esteemed by Henry IV. and his son, *qui de Gallis triumphavit*. Henry V. was scarcely twelve years of age when Chaucer died.

† 'Our Yeoman.' Mr Speght, who omits this grant, mentions one of the same purport in the 45 E. III. in which Chaucer is styled 'Vallettus Hospitii,' which he translates—'Grome of the Pallace.' By this he sinks our author as much too low as another writer has raised him too high, by translating the same words—'Gentleman of the King's privy chamber,' [Life of Ch., Urr.]. 'Valet,' or 'Yeoman,' was the intermediate rank between 'Squier' and 'Grome.' See the note on ver. 101. See also the Will of Edward Duke of York, ap. Rymer, an. 1415, where his legacies to his menial servants are thus arranged:—'A un Escuier L s, a [un] vadlet xx s, a un garçon . . . & a un page vi s. viii d.'

'Vallettus' is probably a corruption of 'Vassalettus,' the diminutive of 'Vassallus.' Hence this title was also given, not as a name of service, to young men of the highest quality, before they were knighted.

'Il ot un fis de sa mulier,
Ki neit pas uncore chivaler,
Vallet esteit et beaus et gent.'

—*Roman d'Ispomeion.*

So that if Edward III., as Mr Speght says, 'did entitle Laurence Hastings, Lord of Aburganey, *Valectum nostrum*,' I should guess that the said Lord was not 'the King's grome, page, or servant,' as he supposes, or his yeoman, as Chaucer was, but his ward.

merits were rewarded by this royal bounty,* are points equally unknown.

From this time we find frequent mention of him in various public instruments.† In the 46 E. III. [ap. Rymer] the king

* I should have been glad to have met with any ground for supposing that this mark of royal favour was a reward of our author's poetical merits. That Chaucer had before this time distinguished himself by his poetical performances is almost certain. I have mentioned a suspicion [n. on ver. 1920,] that the 'Assemblee of Foules' alludes to the courtship of Blanche of Lancaster by John of Gaunt, who married her in 1359, the 33d year of E. III. And perhaps the 'Complaint of the Blache Knight' might be written for John of Gaunt during the same courtship. It is still more probable that his translation of the 'Roman de la Rose' and his 'Troilus' were both composed before 1367, the era of which we are speaking. But I think, if the king had really patronised Chaucer as a poet, we must have found some clear evidence of such a connexion. If the one had been fond of verses, the other would certainly have given him some; especially as he might have exerted his genius in the praise of so illustrious a patron without any necessity of flattering. If we consider further, that, a few years after, the king appointed him to be Comptroller of the custom of wool, &c. in the port of London, with the following injunction in his patent,—‘So that the said Geffrey write with his own hand his rolls touching the said office, and continually reside there, and do and execute all things pertaining to the said office in his own proper person, and not by his substitute,’—we shall probably be of opinion, that his majesty was either totally insensible of our author's poetical talents, or at least had no mind to encourage him in the cultivation or exercise of them. It should seem that Edward, though adorned with many royal and heroic virtues, had not the gift of discerning and patronising a great poet; a gift which, like that of genuine poetry, if we may believe one, who perhaps spoke feelingly upon the subject, is only bestowed on the chosen few by the peculiar favour of heaven:—

‘Neque enim, nisi carus ab ortu
Ditis superis, poterit magno favisse poete.’
Milton's ‘Marens.’

I observe, however, that, notwithstanding the petrifying quality with which these customhouse accounts might be expected to operate upon Chaucer's genius, he probably wrote his 'House of Fame' while he was in that office. I gather this from b. ii. ver. 144, where the Eagle says to him—

‘For when thy labour al done is,
And hast made all thy rekenynges,
In stede of rest and of newo thynges
Thou goest home to thyne house anone,’ &c.

† In the 44 E. III. Galf. Ch. in obsequium R. ad partes transmarinas profecturus hab. lit. R. de protectione, 20 Jun. [MS. Harl. 6960, fol. 205.]

appoints him envoy, with two others, to Genoa, by the title of Scutifer Noster.* In the 48 E. III., he has a grant for life of a pitcher of wine daily [ap. Rymer]; and in the same year a grant, during pleasure, of the offices of Comptroller of the custom of wools, and Comptroller of the parva custuma vinorum, &c., in the port of London. Ibid. In the 49 E. III. the king grants to him the wardship of Sir Edmund Staplegate's heir [MSS. Rymer, E. III., vol. ix. n. 12], for which he received £104 [Ib. R. II., vol. i. n. 16]; and in the next year some forfeited wool to the value of £71, 4s. 6d. ['Life of Ch.', Urr.]. In the last year of Ed. III. he was sent to France, along with Sir Guichard D'Angle and Richard Stan, or Sturry, to treat of a marriage between the Prince of Wales, Richard, and a daughter of the French king. Froissart, v. i. ch. 325.

In the next year, 1 R. II., his annuity of twenty marks was confirmed to him, and another annuity of twenty marks was granted to him in lieu of the pitcher of wine daily. See the licence to surrender these grants in the 'Life of Ch.', Urr. It is probable, too, that he was confirmed in his office of Comptroller, though the instrument has not been produced.† In the 11th of R. II., he

* 'Our Squier;' so that in the course of these five years our author had been promoted from the rank of 'Yeoman,' to that of 'Squier,' attendant upon the king. 'Scutifer' and 'Armiger,' *Lat.*, are synonymous terms for the French 'Escuier.' The biographers, thinking, I suppose, the title of 'Squier' too vulgar, have changed it into 'Shield-bearer,' as if Chaucer had the special office of carrying the king's shield.

Some observations have been made upon this appointment of Chaucer, as Envoy to Genoa, in the Discourse, &c. n. 20.

† This is probable, I think, because Chaucer, in his 'Testament of Love,' frequently alludes to his loss of office as one of the greatest misfortunes brought upon him by his meddling in those disturbances which happened in the city of London in the 7th of R. II. When he fled, to avoid being examined in relation to those disturbances, (as he says, 'Test. of L.', fol. 329, b.) he was probably superseded in his office.

In the Editor's MS. additions the following grants, and the dates of them, are thus specified:—

1 R. II. New grant of Comptroller of Wools, 21 Jan., MS. Harl. 6961, fol. 2.

5 R. II. New grant of Comptroller of parva custuma vinorum, 20 Apr. Ibid., fol. 51.

8 R. II. Grant to execute the office of Comptroller by a deputy, 17 Feb. Ibid., fol. 74.

had the king's licence to surrender his two grants of twenty marks each in favour of John Scalby.* In the 13th R. II. he appears to have been Clerk of the Works at Westminster, &c.; and in the following year at Windsor.† In the 17th R. II. the king granted to him a new annuity of twenty pounds [ap. Rymer];‡

* This licence, reciting the two grants, is printed in the 'Life of Ch., Urr.; and the author of that life has observed, that this surrender was probably occasioned by our author's distressed circumstances. Either he despaired of procuring payment of his pensions, or perhaps wanted to raise a sum of ready money. The same writer has extracted from the 'Testament of Love' almost all that is now to be known of the history of this distress, which he ascribes very truly to Chaucer's unfortunate engagements with that party in the city of London, of which John of Northampton was at the head. What the real designs of that party were, and how a trifling city riot, as it seems to have been, came to be treated as a rebellion, are points of great obscurity. There is good ground to believe that Northampton was connected with the Duke of Lancaster. At his trial, in August 1384, he contended 'that he ought not to be tried in the absence of his Lord the Duke:' 'quo verbo,' (says Walsingham, p. 310,) 'suscitavit suspicionem sinistram tam vulgi quam procerum contra Ducem.' He was condemned, however, to perpetual imprisonment; in which he remained till July 1390, 'when' (according to the Monk of Evesham, p. 122,) 'ad instantiam Ducis Lancastriæ, Johannes Northampton—et socii sui nuper de Londoniis banniti, restituti sunt ad pristinas libertates.' The judgment against him was reversed in Parliament the next year, Rot. Parl., 14 R. II., n. 36, and he was restored to his lands, &c., the year following, Rot. Parl., 15 R. II., n. 33. This connexion of Northampton with the Duke of Lancaster will account for the part which Chaucer appears to have taken in this unhappy affair. He was very early attached to that Duke, and was at this time married to a sister of Catharine Swinford, the Duke's mistress; and it is observable that the first mark of royal favour which he received after his distresses was bestowed upon him at the same time that Northampton received his pardon, and probably through the same mediation.

† See 'Tanner's Bib. Brit. v. Chaucer,' n. a. It may justly be doubted whether these two offices together indemnified our author for the loss of his former office in the Customs. That was probably a very lucrative one. He complains of 'being berafte out of dignicie of office, in which he made a gatheringe of worldly godes'; and in another place he speaks of himself as 'once glorious in worldly welefulnessse, and having suche godes in welthe as maken men riche.'—'Test. of L,' fol. 326, a. b. But that he should ever have been possessed of 'lands and revenues to the yearly value almost of a thousand pounds,' according to the tradition repeated by Mr Speght, is quite incredible.

‡ If Chaucer was ever possessed of Dunnington Castle, in Berkshire, as

in the 21st, his protection for two years [Ibid.] ; and in the 22d, a pipe of wine annually [Ibid.] In the next year, the 1st H. IV., his two grants, of the annuity of £20 and of the pipe of wine, were confirmed to him [MSS. Rymer, H. IV., vol. i. n. 27], and at the same time he had an additional grant of an annuity of forty marks [Ibid. n. 15.] He died, according to the inscription on his tombstone, in the beginning of the 2d H. IV., on the 25th of October 1400.

These, I think, are the principal facts in Chaucer's life, which are attested by authentic evidences.* We learn from himself, in

his biographers suppose he was, he must have purchased it about this time : for it appears to have been in the possession of Sir Richard Abberbury in the 16th year of R. II. 'Monast. Ang.' ii. 474. We have no proof of any such purchase, and the situation of his affairs makes it highly improbable. The tradition which Mr Evelyn mentions in his 'Sylva,' of an oak in Dunnington Park called Chaucer's Oak, may be sufficiently accounted for without supposing that it was planted by Chaucer himself, as the castle was undoubtedly in the hands of Thomas Chaucer for many years.

* It appears further, from the 'Exitus,' Pasch. 4 R. II. [MSS. Rymer, vol. ii. n. 3.] that Chaucer, on the 24th May 1381, received at the Exchequer a half-year's payment of his own two annuities of twenty marks each, and also a half-year's payment of an annuity of ten marks, granted by E. III., and confirmed by R. II. to his wife Philippa, 'nuper uni domicellarum Philippæ, nuper Reginæ Anglie.' The title given to her of *domicella* proves that she was unmarried at the time of her being in the Queen's service. There is a patent in Rymer, 43 E. III., by which the King, about four months after Queen Philippa's death, grants annuities to nine of her *domicellæ*, viz. to four of them ten marks, to two five pounds, and to three five marks. One of them is called Philippa Pykard, and might very well be supposed to be the lady whom Chaucer afterwards married, if it were not for two objections—1. That the annuity granted to her is only five pounds, whereas Chaucer's wife appears by this record to have had one of ten marks ; and, 2. That the historians, though they own themselves totally ignorant of the Christian name of Chaucer's wife, are all agreed that her surname was Rouet, the same with that of her father and eldest sister, Catharine Swynford. The first objection might be got over by supposing that her annuity, though at first only five pounds, was increased, perhaps upon her marriage with Chaucer, to ten marks. As to the other point, it is not impossible that the father and the eldest sister, who was his heiress, [See 'Pat.', 13 H. IV., p. 1, m. 35, ap. Rymer.] might bear the name of de Rouet, (or de Roelt, as it is in the 'Pat.', 13 H. IV., just quoted,) from some estate in their possession, and yet the younger sister might be called by the family name of Pykard.

his ‘Treatise on the Astrolabe,’ that he had a son, called Lewis, who was ten years of age in 1391. It is the only circumstance, as I recollect, relating to his family, of which he has informed us. A few other historical particulars relating to himself, which may be collected from his writings, have been taken notice of already; and perhaps a more attentive examination of his works might furnish a few more. We must be cautious, however, in such an examination, of supposing allusions which Chaucer never intended, or of arguing from pieces which he never wrote, as if they were his. We must not infer, from his repeated commendations of the ‘Daysie-flower,’ that he was specially favoured by Margaret, Countess of Pembroke;* and still less should we

If the records of payments at the Exchequer for the eleven years preceding 1381 are still in being, they may enable us to clear up these doubts, and also, perhaps, to ascertain very nearly the time of Chaucer’s marriage, as they will probably shew when he began to receive his wife’s annuity. If this last point were ascertained, we should know better what to think of the relation of Thomas Chaucer to our author. Mr Speght informs us, ‘that some held opinion, that Thomas C. was not the sonne of Geffrey,’ and there are certainly many circumstances which might incline us to that opinion. I was in hopes of meeting with some light upon this subject in a poem which Lydgate is said to have written, entitled, ‘A Complaint upon the Departure of Thomas Chaucer into France, upon the Kynge’s Ambassate.’ A poem, with this title, is extant in MS. Harl. 367, 33, in the handwriting of J. Stowe; but upon inspection I found it to be a mere love-ballad, without the least imaginable reference to Thomas Chaucer.

* I can find no other foundation for this notion. Mr Speght, who first started it, says, that ‘it may appeare in divers treatises by him written: as in the “Prologue of the Legend of Good Women” under the name of the Daysie; and likewise in a ballad, beginning, “In the season of Feverier.”’ The ballad is among the additions made by John Stowe to Chaucer’s works in 1561, and, like the greatest part of those additions, is of very dubious authority, to use the gentlest terms. But supposing it genuine, there is nothing in it to make us believe that it had any reference to the Countess of Pembroke. That its commendations of the ‘Daysie’ ought not to weigh with us is very plain from the other piece cited by Mr Speght; for the ‘Legende of Good Women,’ in which he imagines ‘the Lady Margaret to be honoured under the name of the Daysie,’ was certainly not written till at least twelve years after that lady’s death. See the ‘Discourse,’ &c., n. 3, for the date of the ‘Legende.’ The Countess Margaret must have died not later than 1370, as the Earl’s son, by his second wife Anne, was about nineteen years of age, when he was killed in a tournament in 1391.—Holinshed, p. 471. It is possible that ‘Le dit de la fleur de lis et de la Mar-

set him down as a 'follower' of Alain Chartier,* because his editors have falsely ascribed to him a translation of one of Alain's poems.

guerite,' by Guillaume de Machaut, [Acad. des Insc., t. xx., p. 381,] and the 'Ditté de la fleur de la Margherite,' by Froissart, [Ibid., t. x., p. 669, t. xiv. Hist., p. 223,] (neither of which had the least relation to the Countess of Pembroke,) might furnish us with the true key to those mystical compliments, which our poet has paid to the Daysie-flower.

* Leland was the first author of this story, which is totally inconsistent with chronology. The time of Alain's birth has not been settled with precision ; but he was certainly living near fifty years after Chaucer's death, which makes it morally impossible that the latter should have followed him in his attempts to polish his native language. 'La Balade de Fongieres' [Œuvres d'Alain Chartier, p. 717,] was written upon the taking of that place by the English in 1448. There is another piece attributed to Alain, [Ibid., p. 779,] which is thus entitled, 'Complainte faite à Paris et présentée à sa dame l'an mil quatre cents cinquante deux.' Instead therefore of supposing, from the translation of 'La Belle Dame sans Mercie,' that Chaucer imitated Alain Chartier, we should rather conclude that he was not the author of that translation ; which indeed, in MS. Harl. 372, is expressly attributed to a Sir Richard Ros.

I will just take notice of another opinion, (which has been propagated upon as little foundation,) that Chaucer imitated the Provençal poets. Mr Rymer, who, I believe, first made the discovery, speaks only of his having borrowed from their language, ['View of Trag.' p. 78,] but Mr Dryden found out, that he composed after their manner, particularly his tale of 'The Flower and the Leaf.' (Pref. to 'Fables.') Mr Warton also thinks, that 'The House of Fame' 'was originally a Provencal composition'—'Hist. of Eng. Po.,' pp. 389, 458.

How far Chaucer's language was borrowed has been considered already, in the 'Essay,' &c., Part i. I will only add here, that I have not observed in any of his writings a single phrase or word which has the least appearance of having been fetched by him from the South of the Loire. With respect to the manner and matter of his compositions, till some clear instance of imitation be produced, I shall be slow to believe that in either he ever copied the poets of Provence, with whose works, I apprehend, he had very little, if any, acquaintance.

AN ESSAY
ON THE
LANGUAGE AND VERSIFICATION
OF CHAUCER.

BY T. TYRWHITT.

THE CONTENTS.

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ESSAY.

THE language of Chaucer has undergone two very different judgments. According to one,* he is the ‘well of English undefiled;’ according to another,† he has corrupted and deformed the English idiom by an immoderate mixture of French words. Nor do the opinions with respect to his versification seem to have been less discordant. His contemporaries,‡ and they who lived nearest to his time, universally extol him as the ‘chief Poet of Britain,’ ‘the flower of Poets,’ &c., titles which must be supposed to imply their admiration of his metrical skill, as well as of his other poetical talents; but the later critics,§

* Spenser, F. Q. b. iv. c. ii. st. 32.

† Verstegan, c. 7. ‘Some few ages after [the Conquest] came the poet Geffery Chaucer, who writing his poesies in English is of some called the first illuminator of the English tongue. Of their opinion I am not, though I reverence Chaucer as an excellent poet for his time. He was indeed a great mingler of English with French, unto which language (by like for that he was descended of French, or rather Wallon race) he carried a great affection.’

Skinner, *Etymol. L A. Præf.* ‘Ex hoc malesano novitatis pruritu, Belgæ Gallicas voces passim civitate sua donando patrii sermonis puritatem nuper non leviter inquinârunt, et Chaucerus poeta, pessimo exemplo, integris vocum plaustris ex eadem Gallia in nostram linguam invectis, eam, nimis antea a Normannorum victoria adulteratam, omni fere nativa gratia et nitore spoliavit.’

‡ Lydgate, Occleve, et al.

§ See Dryden, Pref. to his *Fables*. ‘The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us. They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lydgate and Gower, his contemporaries:—“Tis true, I cannot go so far as he who published the last edition of him [Mr Speght];

though they leave him in possession of the same sounding titles, yet they are almost unanimously agreed, that he was either totally ignorant or negligent of metrical rules, and that his verses, if they may be so called, are frequently deficient, by a syllable or two, of their just measure.

It is the purpose of the following Essay to throw some light upon both these questions. Admitting the fact, that the English of Chaucer has a great mixture of French in it, I hope to shew, that this mixture, if a crime, cannot fairly be laid to his charge. I shall then proceed to state some observations upon the most material peculiarities of the Norman-Saxon, or English language, as it appears to have been in general use in the age of Chaucer; and lastly, applying these observations to the poetical parts of 'The Canterbury Tales,' as they are faithfully printed in this edition from the best MSS. which I could procure, I shall leave it to the intelligent reader to determine, whether Chaucer was really ignorant of the laws, or even of the graces, of versification, and whether he was more negligent of either than the very early poets in almost all languages are found to have been.

PART THE FIRST.

§ I. In order to judge, in the first place, how far Chaucer ought to be charged as the importer of the many French words and phrases which are so visible in all his writings, it will be for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and that there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine. But this opinion is not worth confuting; 'tis so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in everything but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader, that equality of numbers in every verse which we call Heroic, was either not known, or not always practised in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise.'

This peremptory decision has never since, that I know, been controverted, except by Mr Urry, whose design of restoring the metre of Chaucer by a collation of MSS. was as laudable, as his execution of it has certainly been unsuccessful.

necessary to take a short view of the early introduction and long prevalency of the French language in this country before his time. It might be sufficient, perhaps, for our purpose to begin this view at the Conquest: but I cannot help observing, from a contemporary historian, that, several years before that great event, the language of France had been introduced into the court of England, and from thence among the people. The account which Ingulphus gives of this matter is,* that Edward, commonly called the Confessor, having been educated at the court of his uncle Duke Richard II. and having resided in Normandy many years, became almost a Frenchman. Upon his return from thence and accession to the throne of England in 1043, he brought over with him a number of Normans, whom he promoted to the highest dignities; and, according to Ingulphus, under the influence of the King and his Norman favourites, the whole nation began to lay aside their English fashions and imitate the manners of the French in many things. In particular, he says expressly, that 'all the nobility in their courts began to speak French, as a great piece of gentility.'

§ II. This fashion, however, of speaking French, having been adopted only in compliance with the caprice of the reigning prince, would not probably have spread very wide or lasted very long; but at the Revolution, which followed soon after in 1066, the language of the Norman conqueror was interwoven with the new political system,† and the several establishments, which were

* Ingulph. Hist. Croyl. p. 62. ed. Gale. 'Rex autem Edwardus natus in Anglia, sed nutritus in Normannia et diutissime immoratus, pene in Gallicum transierat, adducens ac attrahens de Normannia plurimos, quos variis dignitatibus promotoe in immensum exaltabat.—Coepit ergo tota terra sub Rege et sub aliis Normannis introductis Anglicos ritus dimittere, et Francorum mores in multis imitari, Gallicum [scilicet] idioma omnes Magnates in suis curiis tanquam magnum gentilitium loqui, chartas et chirographa sua more Francorum confidere, et propriam consuetudinem in his et in aliis multis erubescere.'

† Robert Holkot (as quoted by Selden, ad Eadmer. p 189) says, that the Conqueror—'deliberavit quomodo linguam Saxoniam posset destruere, et Angliam et Normanniam in idiomate concordare.'—But Holkot wrote only in the fourteenth century, and I do not find that the earlier historians impute to the king so silly a project. On the contrary Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 520, assures us that William—'Anglicam locutionem plerumque

made for the support and security of the one, all contributed, in a greater or less degree, to the diffusion and permanency of the other.

§ III. To begin with the court. If we consider that the King himself, the chief officers of state, and by far the greatest part of the nobility, were all Normans, and could probably speak no language but their own, we can have no doubt that French * was the ordinary language of the court. The few Saxons, who for some time † were admitted there, must have had the strongest inducements to acquire the same language as soon as possible,

sagitat ediscere ; ut sine interprete querelam subjectæ legis posset intellegere, et scita rectitudinis unicuique (prout ratio dictaret) affectuose deprecere. Ast a perceptione hujusmodi durior ætas illum compescebat, et tumultus multimodarum occupationum ad alia necessario adtrahebat.'— And several of his public instruments, which are still extant in Saxon, [Hickes G. A. S. p. 164.—Præf. p. xv. xvi.] prove that he had no objection to using that language in business ; so that it seems more natural to suppose, that the introduction of the French language was a consequence only, and not an object, of his policy.

* I apprehend that long before this time the Danish tongue had ceased to be spoken in Normandy. It was never general there, as appears from a passage of Dudon, l. iii. p. 112. Duke William I gives this reason for sending his son Richard to be educated at Baieux. 'Quoniam quidem Rotomagensis civitas Romana potius quam Daciscæ utitur eloquentia, et Bajocicensis fruitur frequentius Daciscæ lingua quam Romana, volo igitur ut ad Bajocensia deferatur quantocius menia,' &c. If we recollect, that the Danish settlers under Rollo were few in comparison with the original inhabitants, and had probably scarce any use of letters among them, we shall not be surprised that they did not preserve their language for above two or three generations.

From two other passages of the same Dudon we learn, that the Danish language, while it lasted in Normandy, was very similar to the Saxon, [p. 99.] and yet different from it, [p. 100.] 'qualem decet esse sororem.'

† After the death of Edwin, and the imprisonment of Morcar in 1070, we do not read of any Saxon Earl, except Waltheof, and he was executed for misprision of treason about three years after. Orderic. Vit. l. iv. p. 536. It is singular, that Waltheof, according to the Saxon law, suffered death for the concealment of that treason, for which Roger de Breteuil, Earl of Hereford, being tried secundum leges Normannorum, could only be punished by a forfeiture of his inheritance and perpetual imprisonment. Id. p. 535. From this time (says Ingulphus, p. 70) 'Comitatus et Baronias, Episcopatus et Prælatias totius terræ suis Normannis Rex distribuit, et vix aliquem Anglicum ad honoris statum vel alicujus dominii principatum ascendere permisit.'

not merely for the sake of apprehending and answering insignificant questions in the circle, but because in that age affairs of the greatest importance were publicly transacted in the King's court, and there they might be called upon to answer for their possessions and even for their lives. In an ecclesiastical synod, held in the presence of the King in 1072, the venerable Bishop of Worcester, Wulstan, (whose holy simplicity, as the historian * calls it, seems to have preserved him from the degradation which almost all the other English Prelates underwent) was obliged to defend the rights of his see by an interpreter, a monk (according to the same historian †) of very little eloquence, but who had a smattering of the Norman language.

§ IV. If we consider further, that the great Barons, to whom William † distributed a large share of his conquest, when released from their attendance in the King's court, retired to courts of their own, where they in their turn were surrounded by a numerous train of vassals, chiefly their own countrymen, we may be sure that the French language travelled with them into the most distant provinces, and was used by them, not only in their common conversation, but in their civil contracts, their judicial proceedings, and even in the promulgation of their laws. § The

* Will. Malmeb. l. iii. p. 118. 'Hic sancta simplicitas beati Vulstani,' &c. The story which follows perfectly justifies this character. Matt. Paris, ad an. 1095, says that in another synod there was a formal design of deposing Wulstan, and that he was saved only by a miracle. He was accused 'simplicitatis et illiteratura'; — 'et quasi homo idiota, qui linguam Gallicanam non noverat, nec regis consiliis interesse poterat, ipso Rege consentiente et hoc dictante, decernitur deponendus.'

† Ibid. 'Ita datā benedictione Monacho, minimae facundiæ viro, sed Normannicæ linguae sciolo, rem perorans obtinuit.'

¶ There is a curious detail of part of this distribution in Ordericus Vitalia, l. iv. pp. 521, 522, which concludes thus:—'Aliisque advenis, qui sibi cohaeserant, magnos et multos honores contulit; et in tantum quosdam provexit, ut multos in Angliā ditiores et potentiores haberent clientes, quam eorum in Neustria fuerant parentes.' There is an account in the Monast. Angl. t. i. p. 400, of the Conqueror's giving the whole county of Cumberland to Ranulph de Meschines, and of the division which Ranulph made of it among his relations and followers, who appear to have been all foreigners.

§ The ancient Earls had a power of legislation within their counties. William of Malmesbury, speaking of William Fitz-Osberne, Earl of Hereford,

many castles which William built* in different parts of the island, must also have contributed very much to the propagation of the French language among the natives, as it is probable that the foreigners, of whom the garrisons were† entirely composed, would insist upon carrying on all their transactions with the neighbouring country in their own language.

§ V. But the great alteration which, from political motives, was made in the state of the clergy at that time, must have operated perhaps more efficaciously than any other cause to give the French language a deep root in England. The Conqueror seems to have been fully apprised of the strength which the new government might derive from a clergy more closely attached to himself by a community of interests than the native English were likely to be. Accordingly, from the very beginning of his reign, all ecclesiastical preferments, as fast as they became vacant, were given to his Norman chaplains; and, not content to avail himself of the ordinary course of succession, he con-

says: ‘Manet in hunc diem in comitatu ejus apud Herefordum legum quas statuit inconcusse firmitas; ut nullus miles pro qualicunque commisso plus septem solidis solvat; cum in aliis provinciis ob parvam occasiunculam in transgressione præcepti herilis, viginti vel viginti quinque pendantur.’ (Lib. iii. p. 105.)

* Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 511, observes, that before the Conquest, ‘Munitio[n]es, quas Castella Galli nuncupant, Anglicis provinciis paucissimæ fuerant: et ob hoc Angli, licet bellicosi fuerint et audaces, ad resistendum tamen inimicis extiterant debiliores.’ William, at his landing, placed garrisons at Pevensey and Hastings. After the battle, he took possession of Dover, and left a garrison there. He caused ‘firmamenta quadam’ to be made at London, and built a strong citadel at Winchester. Upon his return from Normandy, after the first insurrection of the English, he built a castle within the city of Exeter; another at Warwick; and another at Nottingham. In the city of York, ‘munitionem firmavit, quam delectis militibus custodiendam tradidit.’ At Lincoln, Huntingdon, and Cambridge, ‘castra locavit, et tutelam eorum fortissimis viris commendavit.’ He had also garrisons at Montacute in Somersetshire, and at Shrewsbury. He built fortifications at Chester and Stafford. We read also of castles at Arundel and Stutesbury at this time; and Norwich was so strong as to stand a siege of three months. (Ord. Vit. p. 500–535.)

† Orderic. Vital. l. iv. p. 506. ‘Custodes in castellis strenuos viros ex Gallis collocavit, et opulenta beneficia, pro quibus labores et pericula libenter tolerarent, distribuit.’

trived,* upon various charges of real or pretended irregularities, to remove several of the English bishops and abbots, whose places were in like manner immediately supplied by foreigners. In short, in the space of a very few years, all the sees of England were filled with Normans, or strangers naturalised, if I may so say, in Normandy, and the greatest part of the abbeys in the kingdom were under governors of the same description.

§ VI. It must be allowed, that the confessed superiority † in

* See the transactions of the Council held at Winchester in the year 1070, ap. Flor. Vigorn. p. 636. Having spoken of the degradation of Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Agelmar, Bishop of the East Saxons, he proceeds thus : ‘Abbates etiam aliqui ibi degradati sunt, operam dante rege ut quamplures ex Anglis suo honore privarentur, in quorum locum sua gentis personas subrogavit, ob confirmationem sui (quod noviter acquisierat) regni. Hic et nonnullos, tam episcopos quam Abbates, quos nulla evidenti causa nec concilia nec leges seculi damnabant, suis honoribus privavit, et usque ad finem vitæ custodiæ mancipatos detinuit, suspicione, ut diximus, tantum inductus novi regni.’

In confirmation of what is said here and in the text, if we examine the subscriptions to an ecclesiastical constitution in 1072, (ap. Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 117,) we find that the two archbishops, seven bishops out of eleven, and six abbots out of twelve, were foreigners ; and in about five years more the four other bishoprics, and five at least of the other six abbeys, were in the hands of foreigners.

Another ecclesiastical constitution made at this time has very much the appearance of a political regulation. It orders ‘that the bishops’ seats shall be removed from towns to cities ;’ and in consequence of it the see of Lichfield was removed to Chester ; that of Selesey to Chichester ; that of Elmham to Thetford, and afterwards to Norwich ; that of Shireburne to Salisbury, and that of Dorchester to Lincoln. (Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 118.) When the King had got a set of bishops to his mind, he would wish to have them placed where their influence could be of most service to him.

+ Ordericus Vitalis, l. iv. p. 518, says, that the Normans at the Conquest found the English ‘agrestes et pene illiteratos ;’ and he imputes, with some probability, the decay of learning among them, from the time of Beda and others, to the continual ravages and oppressions of the Danes. See also William of Malmesbury, l. iii. pp. 101, 102. It may be observed, too, from Continuat Hist. Croyland, by Peter of Blois, p. 114, that the first regular lectures (of which we have any account) at Cambridge, were read there by four foreign monks, who had come over into England with Jeffrey, Abbot of Croyland, formerly Prior of St Evroul. They are said to have read ‘diversis in locis a se divisi et formam Aurelianensis studii secuti,’ three of them in grammar, logic, and rhetoric, and the fourth in theology.

literature of the Norman clergy over the English at that time furnished the King with a specious pretext for these promotions ; and it is probable that the prelates, who were thus promoted, made use of the same pretext to justify themselves in disposing of all their best benefices among their friends and countrymen. That this was their constant practice is certain. Nor were the new abbots less industrious to stock their convents* with foreigners, whom they invited over from the continent, partly perhaps for the pleasure of their society, and partly, as we may suppose, in expectation of their support against the cabals of the English monks. And when the great barons, following the royal example, applied themselves to make their peace with the church by giving her a share of their plunder, it was their usual custom to begin their religious establishments with a colony† from some Norman monastery.

§ VII. In this state of things, which seems to have continued‡

* See the preceding note. There was no great harmony at first between the English monks and their new governors. See the proceedings at Glastonbury under Thurstin, [Will. Malm. l. iii. p. 110,] and at Canterbury against Wido. [Chron. Saxon. p. 179, 180. ed. Gibson.]

† The Conqueror had put Goisbert, a monk of Marmontier, at the head of his new foundation of Battle Abbey. (Ord. Vital. l. iv. p. 505.) In like manner Rodger de Montgomery, Earl of Shrewsbury, sent for monks from Séés to begin his Abbey at Shrewsbury. (Id. l. v. p. 581.) Walter Espec also brought over monks of Clervaulx to fill his two Abbeys of Rivaulex and Wardun. (Airl. Rieall. ap. X Script. p. 338.)

Beside these and many other independent foundations, which were in this manner opened for the reception of foreign monks in preference to the natives, a considerable number of religious houses were built and endowed as cells to different monasteries abroad, and, as such, were constantly filled by detachments from the superior society. They are frequently mentioned in our histories under the general name of the ‘Alien Priories ;’ and though several of them, upon various pretexts, had withdrawn themselves from their foreign connexions and been made denizens, no less than one hundred and forty remained in 1414, which were then all suppressed, and their revenues vested in the Crown. See the List. Monast. Angl. v. i. p. 1035.

‡ I suppose that, during this whole period of above two hundred and fifty years, the English language was continually gaining ground, by slow and almost imperceptible degrees, in proportion nearly as the English natives were emerging from that state of depression in which they were placed by the Conquest. We have no reason to believe that much pro-

with little variation to the time of Edward III., it is probable that the French and English languages subsisted together

gress was made in either of these matters before the reign of King John. The loss of Normandy, &c., in that reign, and the consequent regulations of Henry III. and Louis IX., by which the subjects of either crown were made incapable of holding lands in the dominions of the other, [Matth. Paris, ad an. 1244,] must have greatly diminished the usual conflux of Normans to the English court; and the intestine commotions in this country under John and Henry III., in which so many of the greater barons lost their lives and estates, must eventually have opened a way for the English to raise themselves to honours and possessions to which they had very rarely before been admitted to aspire.

In the year 1258, the 42 Henry III., we have a particular instance (the first, I believe, of the kind) of attention on the side of Government to the English part of the community. The Letters Patent which the King was advised to publish in support of the Oxford Provisions, were sent to each county in Latin, French, and English. [Annal. Burton. p. 416. One of them has been printed from the Patent-roll, 43 H. III. n. 40, m. 15, by Somner in his Dict. Sax. v. Unnan, and by Hearne, Text. Roff. p. 391.] At the same time, all the proceedings in the business of the Provisions appear to have been carried on in French, and the principal persons in both parties are evidently of foreign extraction.

If a conjecture may be allowed in a matter so little capable of proof, I should think it probable that the necessity which the great barons were under at this time of engaging the body of the people to support them in their opposition to a new set of foreigners, chiefly Poitevins, contributed very much to abolish the invidious distinctions which had long subsisted between the French and English parts of the nation. In the early times after the Conquest, if we may believe Henry of Huntingdon, [l. vi. p. 370.] ‘to be called an Englishman was a reproach;’ but when the Clares, the Bohuns, the Bigods, &c., were raising armies for the expulsion of foreigners out of the kingdom, they would not probably be unwilling to have themselves considered as natives of England. Accordingly, Matthew Paris [p. 833] calls Hugh Bigod (a brother of the Earl Marshall) ‘virum de terra Anglorum naturalem et ingenuum;’ and in another passage, [p. 851,] he appropriates the title of ‘alienigenæ’ to those foreigners, ‘qui Reginæ attinentes per eam introducti fuerant in Angliam;’ and so, perhaps, the word ought generally to be understood in the transactions of that reign. None but persons born out of England were then esteemed as foreigners.

About the same time we find an Archbishop of York objecting to Clerks (recommended to benefices by the Pope,) because they were ‘ignorant of the English language,’ [Matt. Par. p. 831;] which seems to imply that a knowledge of that language was then considered among the proper qualifications of an ecclesiastic: but that it was not necessarily required, even in the parochial clergy, appears from the great number of foreign parsons,

throughout the kingdom; the higher orders, both of the clergy and laity,* speaking almost universally French, the lower revicars, &c., who had the King's letters of protection in the 25th year of Edward I. See the Lists in Prynne, t. i. p. 709-720.

* The testimony of Robert of Gloucester (who lived in the times of H. III. and E. L.) is so full and precise to this point, that I trust the reader will not be displeased to see it in his own words, or rather in the words of that very incorrect MS. which Hearne has religiously followed in his edition:—

Rob. Glouc. p. 364.

Thus come lo! Engelond into Normannes honde.
And the Normans ne couthe speke the bote her owe * speche,
And speke Frenche as dude atom,^t and here chyldren dude al so teche.
So that hey men of thy lond, that of her blod come,
Holdeth alle thulke speche, that hil of hem nome.
Vor bote ; a man couthe French me tolth, ¶ of hym wel lute;
Ac lowe || men holdeth to Englyss and to hor kunde speche yuta. ¶
Ich wene ther ne be man in world contreyes none,
That ne holdeth to her kunde speche, bote Engelond one.
Ac wel me wot vor to conne bothe wel yt ya,
Vor the more that a man con, the more worth he ya.

I shall throw together here a few miscellaneous facts in confirmation of this general testimony of Robert of Gloucester.

A letter of Hugh, Bishop of Coventry, preserved by Hoveden, [p. 704,] assures us, that William, Bishop of Ely, Chancellor and Prime Minister to Richard L., 'linguam Anglicanam prorsus ignorabat.'

In the reign of Henry III., Robert of Gloucester, intending, as it should seem, to give the very words of Peter, Bishop of Hereford, (whom he has just called 'a Freins bishop,') makes him speak thus,—'Par Crist,' he sede, 'Sir Tomas, tu is maveis. Meint ben te ay fet.'—(Rob. Glouc., p. 537.)

There is a more pleasant instance of the familiar use of the French language by a bishop, as late as the time of Edward II. Louis, consecrated Bishop of Durham in 1318, was unfortunately very illiterate—'Laicus ; Latinum non intelligens, sed cum difficultate pronuncians. Unde, cum in consecratione sua profiteri debuit, quamvis per multos dies ante instrutorem habuisse, legere nescivit : et cum, auriculantibus [f. articulantibus] aliis, cum difficultate ad illud verbum metropolitice pervenisset, et diu anhelans pronunciare non posset, dixit in Gallico ; Seit pur dite.—Et cum similiter celebraret ordines, nec illud verbum in ænigmate proferre posset, dixit circumstantibus ; Par Seint Lowys, il ne fu pas curteis, qui coste parole ici escrit.'—(Hist. Dunelm. ap Wharton, Ang. Sax., t. i., p. 761.)

The transactions at Norham, in 1291, the 20 Ed. L., with respect to the Scottish succession, appear to have been almost wholly carried on in French, for which it is difficult to account, but by supposing that language to have been the language of the court in both nations. See the Roll de

* But their own.

† For but.

|| But kinde, natural.

‡ Did at home.

§ Men told.—lite, little.

¶ Yet.

taining the use of their native tongue, but also frequently adding to it a knowledge of the other. The general inducements which the English had to acquire the French language have been touched upon above; to which must be added, that the children, who were put to learn Latin, were under a necessity of learning French at the same time, as it was the constant practice in all schools, from the Conquest* till about the reign of Edward III.

Superior. Reg. Angl. in Prynne, t. i. p. 487, et seq. Edward's claim of the Superiority is first made by Sir Roger Brabazon 'Sermone Gallico'; and afterwards the Bishop of Bath and Wells, and the King himself, speak to the assembly of English and Scots in the same language.—(Ibid. p. 499, 501.)

The answers of the Bishop of Durham to the Pope's Nuncios in Gallico [Walt. Hemingf. ad an. 1295] may be supposed to have been out of complaisance to the Cardinals, (though, by the way, they do not appear to have been Frenchmen;) but no such construction can be put upon the following fact related by Matthew of Westminster, [ad an. 1301, p. 438]:—The Archbishop of Canterbury informs the Pope that he had presented his Holiness's letters to the King in a full court, 'quas ipse dominus rex reverenter recipiens, eas publice legi coram omnibus, et in Gallicâ lingua fecerat patenter exponi.'

* Ingulphus, a contemporary writer, informs us that this practice began at the Conquest, p. 71:—'Ipsum etiam idioma [Anglicum] tantum abhorrebant, [Normanni] quod leges terre statutaque Anglicorum regum lingua Gallica tractarentur; et pueris etiam in scholis principia literarum grammatica Gallice ac non Anglice traderentur; modus etiam scribendi Anglicus omitteretur, et modus Gallicus in chartis et in libris omnibus admitteretur.'—And Trevisa, the translator and augmenter of Higden's Polychronicon, in the reign of Richard II., gives us a very particular account of its beginning to be disused within his own memory. The two passages of Higden and Trevisa throw so much light upon the subject of our present inquiry, that I shall insert them both at length, from MS. Harl. 1900, as being more correct in several places than the MS. from which Dr Hickes formerly printed them in his Praef. ad Thes. Ling. Septent., p. xvii.

'Higden's Polychron.' b. i. c. lix. 'This apayringe of the birthe tonge is by cause of tweye thinges; oon is for children in scole, azenes the usage and maner of alle other naciouns, beth compelled for to leve her owne langage, and for to constrewe her lessouns and her thingis a Frenshe, and haveth siththe that the Normans come first into England. Also gentil mennes children beth ytautz for to speke Frenshe, from the tyme that thei beth rokked in her cradel, and kunneth speke and playe with a childes brooche. And uplondish men wole likne hem self to gentil men, and fondeth with grete bisynesse for to speke Frenshe, for to be the more ytold of.'

to make the scholars construe their Latin lessons into French. From the discontinuance of this practice, as well as from other causes, the use and probably the knowledge of French, as a separate language, received a considerable check. In the 36th year of Edward III. a law* was made, ‘that all pleas, in the courts of the King or of any other lord, shall be pleaded and judged in the English tongue,’ and the preamble recites, ‘that the French tongue (in which they had been usually pleaded, &c.) was too much unknown,’ or disused; and yet, for near

‘Trevisa.’ ‘This maner was myche yused to fore the first moreyn, and is siththe som del ychaungide. For John Cornwaile, a maistre of grammer, chaungide the lore in grammer scole and construction of Frensch into Englisch, and Richard Pencriche lerned that maner teching of him, and other men of Pencriche. So that now, the zere of oure lord a thousand thre hundred foure score and fyve, of the secunde king Rychard after the Conquest nyne, in alle the gramer scoles of Englund children leveth Frensch, and construeth and lerneth an Englisch, and haveth therby avauntage in oon side and desavauntage in another. Her avauntage is, that thei lerneth her grammer in lasse tyme than children were wont to do. Desavauntage is, that now children of grammer scole kunneth no more Frensch than can her lifte heele. And that is harm for hem, and that schul passee the see and travaile in strange londes, and in many other places also. Also gentel men haveth now mych ylefte for to teche her children Frensch.’

* This celebrated statute is said by Walsingham [p. 179] to have been made ‘ad petitionem communitatis;’ but no such petition appears upon the Parliament-roll; and it seems rather to have been an Act of Grace, moving from the King, who on the same day entered into the fiftieth year of his age; ‘unde in suo jubileo populo suo se exhibuit gratiosum.’—(Walsing., *ibid.*) It is remarkable, too, that the cause of summons at the beginning of this Parliament was declared by Sir Henry Greene, Chief Justice, ‘en Engleis’ (says the Record for the first time); and the same entry is repeated in the Records of the Parliaments 37 and 38 Edw. III., but not in those of 40 Edw. III. or of any later Parliament: either because the custom of opening the cause of summons in French was restored again after that short interval, or, perhaps, because the new practice of opening it in English was so well established, in the opinion of the clerk, as not to need being marked by a special entry.

The reasons assigned, in the preamble to this statute, for having pleas and judgments in the English tongue, might all have been urged, with at least equal force, for having the laws themselves in that language. But the times were not yet ripe for that innovation. The English scale was clearly beginning to preponderate, but the slowness of its motion proves that it had a great weight to overcome.

threescore years after this* the proceedings in Parliament, with very few exceptions, appear to have been all in French, and the statutes continued to be published in the same language, for above one hundred and twenty years, till the first of Richard III.

§ VIII. From what has been said I think we may fairly conclude, that the English language must have imbibed a strong tincture of the French, long before the age of Chaucer, and consequently that he ought not to be charged as the importer of words and phrases, which he only used after the example of his predecessors and in common with his contemporaries. This was the real fact, and is capable of being demonstrated to any one who will take the trouble of comparing the writings of Chaucer with those of Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne,* who both lived

* All the Parliamentary proceedings in English before 1422, the first of Henry VI., are the few which follow:—

The Confession of Thomas Duke of Gloucester, taken at Calais by William Rickhill, and recorded in Parliament, inter Plac. Coron. 21 Ric. II. n. 9. It is printed in Tyrrell, v. iii. p. 793.

Some passages in the Deposition of Richard II., printed at the end of Knighton, int. X Scriptores.

The ordinance between William Lord the Roos and Robert Tirwhitt, Justice of the King's Bench. 13 Hen. IV., n. 13.

A Petition of the Commons, with the King's answer. 2 Hen. V., n. 22.

A Proviso in English, inserted into a French grant of a Disme and Quinisme. 9 Hen. V., n. 10.

At the beginning of the reign of Henry VI. the two languages seem to have been used indifferently. The Subsidy of Wolle, &c., was granted in English. 1 Hen. VI., n. 19. A Proviso in French was added by the Commons to the Articles for the Council of Regency, which are in English. Ibid., n. 33. Even the Royal Assent was given to Bills in English. 2 Hen. VI. and n. 54. ‘Be it ordeined as it is asked.’ ‘Be it as it is axed,’—and again, n. 55.

I have stated this matter so particularly, in order to shew, that when the French language ceased to be generally understood, it was gradually disused in Parliamentary proceedings; and from thence I think we may fairly infer, that while it was used in those proceedings, constantly and exclusively of the English, it must have been very generally understood.

† Robert of Gloucester's ‘Chronicle’ has been published by Hearne, Oxford, 1724, faithfully, I dare say, but from incorrect MSS. The author speaks of himself [p. 560] as living at the time of the battle of Evesham in 1265; and from another passage [p. 224] he seems to have lived beyond the year 1278, though his history ends in 1270. See Hearne's Bref. p. lxviii.

before him, and with those of Sir John Mandeville and Wicliff, who lived at the same time with him. If we could for a moment suppose the contrary; if we could suppose that the English idiom, in the age of Chaucer, remained pure and unmixed, as it was spoken in the courts of Alfred or Egbert, and that the French was still a foreign, or at least a separate language; I would ask, whether it is credible, that a poet, writing in English upon the most familiar subjects, would stuff his compositions with French words and phrases, which, upon the above supposition, must have been unintelligible to the greatest part of his readers; or, if he had been so very absurd, is it conceivable that he should have immediately become, not only the most admired, but also the most popular writer of his time and country?

PART THE SECOND.

Having thus endeavoured to shew, in opposition to the ill-grounded censures of Verstegan and Skinner, that the corruption, or improvement, of the English language by a mixture of French was not originally owing to Chaucer, I shall proceed, in the second part of this essay, to make some observations upon the

Robert Manning of Brunne, or Bourn, in Lincolnshire, translated into English rhyme, from the French of Robert Grosseteste, Bishop of Lincoln, a treatise called ‘Manuel de Pechés,’ as early as the year 1303. This work of his has never been printed, but is preserved among the Harleian MSS. n. 1701, and the Bodleian, n. 2323. He also translated from the French a history of England; the first part, or ‘Gesta Britonum,’ from Master Wace; the remainder, to the death of Edward I., from Peter of Langtoft. His translation was finished in 1338. The latter part, with some extracts from the former, was printed by Hearne in 1725, from a single MS.

Sir John Mandeville’s account of his travels was written in 1356. In the last edition, Lond. 1727, the text is said to have been formed from a collation of several MSS. and seems to be tolerably correct.

Wicliff died in 1384. His translation of the New Testament was printed for the first time by Lewis, Lond. 1731. There is an immense catalogue of other works, either really his or ascribed to him, still extant in MS. See his Life by Lewis; and Tanner, Bibl. Brit.

most material peculiarities of that Norman-Saxon dialect, which I suppose to have prevailed in the age of Chaucer, and which, in substance, remains to this day the language of England.

§ I. By what means the French tongue was first introduced and propagated in this island has been sufficiently explained above; but to ascertain with any exactness the degrees by which it insinuated itself and was ingrafted into the Saxon, would be a much more difficult task,* for want of a regular series of the writings of approved authors transmitted to us by authentic copies. Luckily for us, as our concern is solely with that period when the incorporation of the two languages was completed, it is of no great importance to determine the precise time at which any word or phrase became naturalised; and for the same reason, we have no need to inquire minutely, with respect to the other alterations which the Saxon language in its several stages appears to have undergone, how far they proceeded from the natural mutability of human speech, especially among an unlearned people, and how far they were owing to a successive conflux of Danish and Norman invaders.

§ II. The following observations therefore will chiefly refer to the state in which the English language appears to have been about the time of Chaucer, and they will naturally divide themselves into two parts. The first will consider the remains of the ancient Saxon mass, however defaced or disguised by various accidents; the second will endeavour to point out the nature and effects of the accessions which, in the course of near three centuries, it had received from Normandy.

§ III. For the sake of method it will be convenient to go

* In order to trace with exactness the progress of any language, it seems necessary, 1. That we should have before us a continued series of authors; 2. That those authors should have been approved, as having written at least with purity; and 3. That their writings should have been correctly copied. In the English language, we have scarce any authors within the first century after the Conquest; of those who wrote before Chaucer, and whose writings have been preserved, we have no testimony of approbation from their contemporaries or successors; and lastly, the copies of their works, which we have received, are in general so full of inaccuracies, as to make it often very difficult for us to be assured that we are in possession of the genuine words of the author.

through the several parts of speech in the order in which they are commonly ranged by grammarians.

1. The prepositive article *re*, *reo*, *þat*, (which answered to the *ó*, *η*, *το*, of the Greeks, in all its varieties of gender, case, and number,) had been long laid aside, and instead of it an indeclinable ‘the’ was prefixed to all sorts of nouns, in all cases, and in both numbers.

2. The declensions of the nouns substantive were reduced from six to one; and instead of a variety of cases in both numbers, they had only a genitive case singular, which was uniformly deduced from the nominative by adding to it *es*; or only *s*, if it ended in an *e* feminine; and that same form was used to express the plural number* in all its cases: as, nom., ‘shour;’ gen., ‘shoures;’ plur., ‘shoures;’—nom., ‘name;’ gen., ‘names;’ plur., ‘names.’

The nouns adjective had lost all distinction of gender, case, or number.

3. The primitive pronouns retained one oblique case † in each number: as, ‘Ic,’ or ‘I,’ ‘we:’ obl., ‘me;’ ‘us;’—‘thou;’ ‘ye:’ obl., ‘thee;’ ‘you;’—‘he,’ ‘she;’ ‘hi,’ † or ‘they:’ obl., ‘him,’ ‘hire;’ ‘hem,’ or ‘them.’

* It is scarce necessary to take notice of a few plurals, which were expressed differently, though their number was greater in the time of Chaucer than it is now. Some of them seem to retain their termination in *en* from the second declension of the Saxons; as ‘oxen,’ ‘eyen,’ ‘hosen,’ &c. Others seem to have adopted it *euphonice gratid*; as, ‘brethren,’ ‘eyren,’ instead of, *bnuȝnu*, *ægynu*. And a few seem to have been always irregularly declined; as, ‘men,’ ‘women,’ ‘mice,’ ‘lice,’ ‘feet,’ &c. See Hickes, ‘Gr. A. S.’ pp. 11, 12.

† I take no notice here of the genitive cases, ‘min,’ ‘thin,’ ‘oure,’ ‘youre,’ &c., as being at this time hardly ever distinguishable from pronouns possessive. How are we to know whether ‘min boke’ should be rendered ‘liber mei,’ or ‘liber meus?’ In the plural number, however, in a few instances, the genitive case seems to have retained its proper power. C. T. v. 825, ‘oure aller cok,’ would be more naturally translated—‘nostrum omnium gallus,’ than, ‘noster omnium.’ And so in P. P. fol. cxi, ‘Youre aller hele’—‘vestrum omnium salus;’ not, ‘vestra’

‡ It is very difficult to say from whence, or why, the pronouns, ‘they,’ ‘them,’ and ‘their,’ were introduced into our language. The Saxon pronouns, ‘hi,’ ‘hem,’ and ‘hir,’ seem to have been in constant use in the time of Robert of Gloucester. Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer use ‘they,’ for ‘hi;’ but never, as I remember, (in the MSS. of authority) ‘them,’ or ‘their.’

Their possessives were in the same state with the adjectives; ‘min,’ ‘thin,’ ‘his,’ ‘hire;’ ‘oure,’ ‘youre,’ ‘hir,’ or ‘their.’*

The interrogative and relative ‘who’ had a genitive and accusative case ‘whos,’ and ‘whom,’ but no variety of number.

On the contrary, the demonstrative, ‘this,’ and ‘that,’ had a plural expression, ‘thise,’ and ‘tho,’ but no variety of case.

The other words, which are often, though improperly, placed in the class of pronouns, were all become undeclined, like the adjectives; except, ‘eyther,’ alteruter; ‘neyther,’ neuter; ‘other,’ alter; which had a genitive case singular ‘eytheras,’ ‘neytheres,’ ‘otheres;’ ‘other,’ alius, had a genitive case singular, and a plural number, ‘otheres;’ and ‘aller’ (a corruption of *alja*) was still in use, as the genitive plural of ‘alle.’†

* The four last of these possessive pronouns were sometimes expressed a little differently, viz., ‘hires,’ ‘oures,’ ‘youres,’ and ‘hirs,’ or ‘theirs;’ as they are still, when the noun to which they belong is understood, or when they are placed after it in a sentence. To the question, ‘Whose book is this?’ we answer, ‘hers,’ ‘ours,’ ‘yours,’ or ‘theirs;’ or we declare, ‘This book is “hers,” “ours,” &c. I can hardly conceive that the final *s* in these words is a mark of the possessive (or genitive) case, as a very able writer, [‘Short Introduction to English Grammar,’ pp. 35, 6] seems to be inclined to think; because in the instances just mentioned, and in all which I have been able to find or to imagine, I cannot discover the least trace of the usual powers of the genitive case. The learned Wallis [‘Gram. Ang.’ c. 7] has explained the use of these pronouns without attempting to account for their form. He only adds, ‘Nonnulli, hern, ourn, yourn, hisn, dicunt, pro hers, ours, &c. sed barbarè, nec quisquam (credo) sic scribere solet.’ If it could be proved that these words were anciently terminated in *n*, we might be led to conjecture that they were originally abbreviations of ‘her own,’ ‘our own,’ &c. the *n* being afterwards softened into *s*, as it has been in many other words.

† It may be proper here to take a little notice of the pronoun, or pronominal adjective, ‘self,’ which our best grammarians, from Wallis downwards, have attempted to metamorphose into a substantive. In the Saxon language, it is certain that ‘sylf’ was declined like other adjectives, and was joined in construction with pronouns personal and substantive, just as *ipse* is in Latin. They said, ‘Ic sylf,’ *ego ipse*; ‘min sylfes,’ *mei ipsius*; ‘me sylfne,’ *me ipsum*, &c.; ‘Petrus sylf,’ *Petrus ipse*, &c. [See Hickes, ‘Gr. A. S.,’ p. 26.] In the age of Chaucer, ‘self,’ like other adjectives, was become undeclined. Though he writes, ‘self,’ ‘selve,’ and ‘selven,’ those varieties do not denote any distinction of case or number; for he uses indifferently ‘himself’ and ‘himselven;’ ‘hemself’ and ‘hemselven.’ He joins it with substantives, in the sense of *ipse*, as the Saxons

4. The verbs, at the time of which we are treating, were very nearly reduced to the simple state in which they are at present.

They had four modes, as now—the indicative, the imperative, the subjunctive, and the infinitive; and only two expressions of time, the present and the past. All the other varieties of mode and time were expressed by auxiliary verbs.

In the inflexions of their verbs, they differed very little from us—in the singular number: ‘I love,’ ‘thou lovest,’ ‘he loveth:’ but in the plural they were not agreed among themselves; some* adhering to the old Saxon form, ‘we loveth,’ ‘ye loveth,’ ‘they loveth;’ and others adopting what seems to have been the did. [See v. 2862, ‘In that selve grove;’ *In illo ipso nemore.* V. 4535, ‘Thy selve neighebour;’ *Ipse tuus vicinus.*] But his great departure from the ancient usage was with respect to the pronouns personal prefixed to ‘self.’ Instead of declining them through the cases which they still retained, he uses constantly, ‘myself’ for ‘I self’ and ‘me self;’ ‘thyself,’ for ‘thou self’ and ‘thee self;’ ‘himself’ and ‘hire self,’ for ‘he self’ and ‘she self;’ and in the plural number, ‘our self,’ for ‘we self’ and ‘us self;’ ‘your self,’ for ‘ye self’ and ‘you self;’ and ‘hem self,’ for ‘they self.’

It would be vain to attempt to defend this practice of Chaucer upon any principles of reason or grammatical analogy. All that can be said for it is, that perhaps any regular practice was preferable to the confusion and uncertainty which seems to have prevailed before. Accordingly, the writers who succeeded him following his example, it became a rule, as I conceive, of the English language, that personal pronouns prefixed to ‘self’ were only used in one case in each number; viz., those of the first and second person in the genitive case, according to the Saxon form, and those of the third in the accusative.

By degrees a custom was introduced of annexing ‘self’ to pronouns in the singular number only, and ‘selves’ (a corruption, I suppose, of ‘selven’) to those in the plural. This probably contributed to persuade our late grammarians that ‘self’ was a substantive, as the true English adjective does not vary in the plural number. Another cause of their mistake might be that they considered ‘my,’ ‘thy,’ ‘our,’ ‘your,’ to which ‘self’ is usually joined, as pronouns ‘possessive;’ whereas I think it more probable that they were the Saxon genitive cases of the personal pronouns. The metaphysical substantive ‘self,’ of which our more modern philosophers and poets have made so much use, was unknown, I believe, in the time of Chaucer.

* In the long quotation from Trevisa (which see above, p. 1) it may be observed, that all his plural verbs of the present tense terminate in ‘eth;’ whereas in Sir John Mandeville and Chaucer they terminate almost as constantly in ‘en.’

Teutonic, 'we loven,' 'ye loven,' 'they loven.' In the plural of the past tense the latter form prevailed universally: 'I loved,' 'thou lovedest,' 'he loved;,' 'we loveden,' 'ye loveden,' 'they loveden.'

The second person plural in the imperative mode regularly terminated in 'eth,' as, 'loveth ye;'^{*} though the final consonants, according to the genius of the language, were frequently omitted, especially in verse.

The Saxon termination of the infinitive in 'an' had been long changed into 'en ;' 'to loven,' 'to liven,' &c.; and they were beginning to drop the 'n ;' 'to love,' 'to live.'

The participle of the present time began to be generally terminated in 'ing; as, 'loving;' though the old form, which terminated in 'ende,' or 'ande,' was still in use; as, 'lovende,' or 'lovande.' The participle of the past time continued to be formed, as the past time itself was, in 'ed; as, 'loved; or in some contraction of 'ed;†

* Mand., p. 281. And at certeyn houres, thei seyn to certeyn officeres — 'Maketh pees,' (i.e. 'make ye silence.') And than sein the officeres, 'Now pees! lysteneth' (i.e.) 'listen ye.'—In the following page, 'stondeth' is used for 'stand ye; and 'putteth' for 'put ye.'

† The methods by which the final 'ed' of the past tense and its participle were contracted and abbreviated, in the age of Chaucer, were chiefly the following:—

1. By throwing away the 'd.'

This method took place in verbs, whose last consonant was 't,' preceded by a consonant. Thus, 'caste,' 'coste,' 'hurte,' 'putte,' 'slitte,' were used instead of 'casted,' 'costed,' 'hurted,' 'putted,' 'slitted.'

2. By transposing the 'd.'

This was very generally done in verbs whose last consonant was 'd,' preceded by a vowel. Thus, instead of 'reded,' 'leded,' 'spreded,' 'bleded,' 'feded,' it was usual to write, 'redder,' 'ledde,' 'spredde,' 'bledde,' 'fedde.' And this same method of transposition, I apprehend, was originally applied to shorten those words which we now contract by syncope; as 'lov'd,' 'liv'd,' 'smil'd,' 'hear'd,' 'fear'd,' which were anciently written, 'lovde,' 'livde,' 'smilde,' 'herde,' 'ferde.'

3. By transposing the 'd,' and changing it into 't.'

This method was used, 1. In verbs, whose last consonant was 't,' preceded by a vowel. Thus, 'leted,' 'sweted,' 'meted,' were changed into 'lette,' 'swette,' 'mette.' 2. In verbs, whose last consonant was 'd,' preceded by a consonant. Thus, 'bended,' 'bilded,' 'girded,' were changed into 'bente,' 'bilde,' 'girte.' And generally, in verbs, in which 'd' is changed into 't,' I conceive that 'd' was first transposed, so that 'dwelled,' 'passed,' 'dremed,' 'feled,' 'keped,' should be supposed to have been first changed into

except among the irregular verbs,* where for the most part it terminated in ‘en ;’ as, ‘bounden,’ ‘founden.’

The greatest part of the auxiliary verbs were only in use in the present and past tenses of their indicative and subjunctive modes. They were inflected in those tenses like other verbs, and were prefixed to the infinitive mode of the verb to which they were auxiliary. ‘I shall loven ;’ ‘I will, or woll, loven ;’ ‘I may, or mow, loven ;’ ‘I can, or con, loven,’ &c. ‘We shallen loven ;’ ‘we willen, or wollen, loven ;’ ‘we mowen loven ;’ ‘we connen loven,’ &c. In the past tense, ‘I† shulde loven ;’ ‘I wolde loven ;’ ‘I

‘dwellde,’ ‘passde,’ ‘dremde,’ ‘felde,’ ‘kepde,’ and then into ‘dwelte,’ ‘paste,’ ‘dreunte,’ ‘felte,’ ‘kepte.’

4. The last method, together with a change of the radical vowel, will account for the analogy of a species of verbs generally reputed anomalous, which form their past time and its participle according to modern orthography, in ‘ght.’ The process seems to have been thus:—‘Bring,’ ‘bringed,’ ‘brongde,’ ‘brogde,’ ‘brogte ;’ ‘think,’ ‘thinked,’ ‘thonkde,’ ‘thokde,’ ‘thokte ;’ ‘teche,’ ‘teched,’ ‘tachde,’ ‘tachte,’ &c. Only ‘fought,’ from ‘fighted,’ seems to have been formed by throwing away the ‘d,’ (according to method 1,) and changing the radical vowel. See instances of similar contractions in the Francic language.—Hickes, ‘Gramm. Fr. Th.’ p. 66.

* I consider those verbs only as irregular in which the past time and its participle differ from each other. Their varieties are too numerous to be particularly examined here; but I believe there are scarce any in which the deviations from the regular form will not appear to have been made by some method of contraction or abbreviation similar to those which have been pointed out in the last note among the regular verbs. The common termination of the participle in ‘en’ is clearly a substitution for ‘ed,’ probably for the sake of a more agreeable sound; and it is often shortened, as ‘ed’ has been shewn to be, by transposition. Thus, ‘drawen,’ ‘knowen,’ ‘boren,’ ‘stolen,’ were changed into ‘drawne,’ ‘knowne,’ ‘borne,’ ‘stolne.’

† ‘Shulde’ and ‘wolde’ are contracted from ‘shulled’ and ‘wolded’ by transposing the ‘d,’ according to method 2.

‘Mighte’ and ‘moughte’ are formed from ‘maghed’ and ‘moghed,’ according to method 3; ‘maghed,’ ‘maghde,’ ‘maghte ;’ ‘moghed,’ ‘moghde,’ ‘moghte.’

‘Coude’ is from ‘conned,’ by transposition of the ‘d,’ and softening the ‘n’ into ‘u.’ It is often written ‘couthe,’ and always so, I believe, when it is used as a participle. In the same manner Bishop Douglas and other Scotch writers use ‘begouth’ as the preterite of ‘begin.’ ‘Begonned,’ ‘begonde ;’ ‘begoude,’ ‘begoutha.’

mighty, or moughte loven ;' 'I coude loven,' &c. 'We shulden,' 'we wolden,' 'we mighten, or moughten,' 'we couden loven,' &c.

The auxiliary 'to haven' was a complete verb, and, being prefixed to the participle of the past time, was used to express the preterperfect and preterpluperfect tenses. 'I have loved,' 'thou havest, or hast loved,' 'he haveth, or hath loved ;' 'we haven, or had loved,' &c. 'I hadde* loved,' 'thou haddest loved,' 'he hadde loved ;' 'we, ye, they, hadden loved.'

The auxiliary 'to ben' was also a complete verb, and being prefixed to the participle of the past time, with the help of the other auxiliary verbs, supplied the place of the whole passive voice, for which the Saxon language had no other form of expression. 'I am,' 'thou art,' 'he is loved ;' 'we, ye, they, aren, or ben loved.' 'I was,' 'thou wast,' 'he was loved ;' 'we, ye, they, weren loved.'†

5. With respect to the indeclinable parts of speech, it will be sufficient to observe here, that many of them still remained pure Saxon : the greatest number had undergone a slight change of a letter or two; and the more considerable alterations, by which some had been disfigured, were fairly deducible from that propensity to abbreviation, for which the inhabitants of this island have been long remarkable, though perhaps not more justly so than their neighbours.

§ IV. Such was, in general, the state of the Saxon part of the English language when Chaucer began to write : let us now

* 'Hadde' is contracted from 'haved,' as 'made' is from 'maked.' See Hickes, 'Gram. Fr. Th.,' p. 66.

† The verb 'to do' is considered by Wallis, and other later grammarians, as an auxiliary verb. It is so used, though very rarely, by Chaucer. [See v. 14,742-4.] He more commonly uses it transitively : [v. 10,074, 'Do stripen me ;' 'Faites me depouiller.'—V. 10,075, 'Do me drenche ;' 'Faites me noyer,'] but still more frequently to save the repetition of a verb. [V. 269,

'His eyen twinkelde in his hed aright,
As "don" the sterres in a frosty night.]

Dr Hickes has taken notice that 'do' was used in this last manner by the Saxons ['Gr. A. S.,' p. 77.] and so was 'faire' by the French, and indeed is still. It must be confessed, that the exact power which 'do,' as an auxiliary, now has in our language, is not easy to be defined, and still less to be accounted for from analogy.

take a short view of the accessions which it may be supposed to have received at different times from Normandy.

As the language of our ancestors was complete in all its parts, and had served them for the purposes of discourse and even of composition in various kinds, long before they had any intimate acquaintance with their French neighbours, they had no call from necessity, and consequently no sufficient inducement, to alter its original and radical constitutions, or even its customary forms. Accordingly, we have just seen, that, in all the essential parts of speech, the characteristical features of the Saxon idiom were always preserved; and we shall see presently, that the crowds of French words, which from time to time were imported, were themselves made subject, either immediately or by degrees, to the laws of that same idiom.

§ V. The words which were thus imported were chiefly nouns substantive, adjectives, verbs, and participles. The adverbs, which are derived from French adjectives, seem to have been formed from them after they were Anglicised, as they have all the Saxon termination 'lich' or 'ly,'* instead of the French 'ment.' As to the other indeclinable parts of speech, our language, being sufficiently rich in its own stores, has borrowed nothing from France, except perhaps an interjection or two.

The nouns substantive in the French language (as in all the other languages derived from the Latin) had lost their cases long before the time of which we are treating; but such of them as were naturalised here, seem all to have acquired a genitive case, according to the corrupted Saxon form, which has been stated above. Their plural number was also new modelled to the same form, if necessary; for in nouns ending in *e* feminine, as the greater part of the French did, the two languages were already agreed: Nom., 'flour,' gen., 'floures,' plur., 'floures';—nom., 'dame,' gen., 'dames,' plur., 'dames.'

On the contrary, the adjectives, which at home had a distinction of gender and number, upon their naturalisation here, seem to have been generally stript of both, and reduced to the

* As 'rarely,' 'continually,' 'verailey,' 'bravely,' &c., which correspond to the French adverbs, 'rarement,' 'continuellement,' 'véralement,' 'bravement,' &c.

simple state of the English adjective, without case, gender, or number.

The French verbs were obliged to lay aside all the differences of conjugation. ‘Accorder,’ ‘souffrir,’ ‘recevoir,’ ‘descendre,’ were regularly changed into ‘accorden,’ ‘suffren,’ ‘receiven,’ ‘descenden.’ They brought with them only two tenses, the present and the past; nor did they retain any singularity of inflection which could distinguish them from other verbs of Saxon growth.

The participle, indeed, of the present time, in some verbs, appears to have still preserved its original French form; as ‘usant,’ ‘suffisant,’ &c.

The participle of the past time adopted, almost universally, the regular Saxon termination in ‘ed;’ as ‘accorded,’ ‘suffred,’ ‘received,’ ‘descended.’ It even frequently assumed the prepositive particle *ȝe*, (or ‘y,’ as it was latterly written,) which, among the Saxons, was very generally, though not peculiarly, prefixed to that participle.

§ VI. Upon the whole, I believe it may be said with truth, that, at the time which we are considering, though the form of our language was still Saxon, the matter was in a great measure French. The novelties of all kinds which the revolution in 1066 had introduced demanded a large supply of new terms; and our ancestors very naturally took what they wanted from the language which was already familiar to a considerable part of the community. Our poets, in particular, who have generally the principal share in modelling a language, found it their interest to borrow as many words as they conveniently could from France. As they were for a long time chiefly translators, this expedient saved them the trouble of hunting for correspondent terms in Saxon. The French words, too, being the remains of a polished language, were smoother and slid easier into metre than the Saxon, which had never undergone any regular cultivation: their final syllables chimed together with more frequent consonancies, and their accents were better adapted to rhyming poetry. But more of this in the next part.

PART THE THIRD.

Before we proceed in the third and last part of this Essay, in which we are to consider the versification of Chaucer, it may be useful to premise a few observations upon the state of English poetry antecedent to his time.

§ I. That the Saxons had a species of writing, which differed from their common prose, and was considered by themselves as poetry,* is very certain; but it seems equally certain, that their compositions of that kind were neither divided into verses of a determinate number of syllables, nor embellished with what we call rhyme.† There are no traces, I believe, to be found of

* The account which Beda has given of Cædmon [‘Eccl. Hist.’ l. iv. c. 24,] is sufficient to prove this. He repeatedly calls the compositions of Cædmon, ‘carmina,’ ‘poemata,’ and in one place ‘versus;’ which words in the Saxon translations are rendered, *lēwþ*, *lēwþ rōnger* or *rōnger*, and *reñj*; and ‘ars canendi’ is translated, *lēwþ cƿrft* or *rāng cƿrft*.

Asher also, in his Life of Alfred, speaks of ‘Saxonica poemata’ and ‘Saxonica carmina,’ [pp. 16, 43] and most probably the ‘Cantilenæ per successiones temporum detritæ,’ which Malmesbury cites in his ‘History,’ l. ii. p. 52, were in the Saxon language. The same writer [l. v. de Pontif. edit. Gale.] mentions a ‘Carmen Triviale’ of Aldhelm, (the author of the Latin poem, ‘De Virginitate,’ who died in 709,) as ‘adhuc vulgo cantitatum,’ and he quotes the testimony of King Alfred, in his ‘Liber Manualis’ or ‘Hand-boc,’ as saying ‘that no one was ever equal to Aldhelm in English poetry.’

+ Both these circumstances are evident from the most cursory view of the several specimens of Saxon poetry which Hickes has exhibited in his ‘Gram. Ang. Sax.’ c. xxi., and they are allowed by that learned writer himself. Unwilling, however, as it should seem, to leave his favourite language without some system of versification, he supposes that the Saxons observed the quantity of syllables in their verses, ‘though perhaps,’ he adds, ‘not so strictly as the heroic Greek and Latin poets.’

He gives three reasons for this supposition. 1. Because they did not use rhyme. 2. Because they transposed their words in such an unnatural manner. ‘Hoc autem cur facerent Anglo-Saxonum Poetæ, nulla, ut videtur, alia assignari causa potest, quam quæ, ut idem facerent, Græcos et Latinos poetas coegerit; nemipe Metri Lex.’ 3. Because they had a great number of dissyllable and polysyllable words which were fit for metrical feet.

However specious these reasons may appear, they are certainly far from conclusive, even if we had no monuments of Saxon poetry remaining; but

either rhyme or metre in our language, till some years after the Conquest; so that I should apprehend we must have been

in the present case, I apprehend, the only satisfactory proof would have been to have produced, out of the great heap of poetical compositions in the Saxon language, some regular metrical verses; that is, some portions of words similar to each other in the nature and order of their component syllables, and occurring either in a continued series, or at stated intervals. If all external proofs of the nature of the Roman poetry were lost, a few verses of Virgil or Horace would be sufficient to convince us that their metres were regulated by the quantity of syllables; and if Cædmon had really written in a metre regulated by the quantity of syllables, a few of his lines must have afforded us the same conviction with respect to the general laws of his versification.

For my own part, I confess myself unable to discover any material distinction of the Saxon poetry from prose, except a greater pomp of diction, and a more stately kind of march.

Our ancestors affected a certain pomp of style in all their compositions. ‘Angli’ (says Malmesbury, l. i. p. 13) ‘pompaticē dictare amant.’ And this affectation, I suspect, was the true cause of their so frequently inverting the natural order of their words, especially in poetry. The obscurity arising from these inversions had the appearance of pomp. That they were not owing to the constraint of any metrical laws (as Hickes supposes) may be presumed from their being commonly used in prose, and even in Latin prose, by Saxon writers. Ethelwerd, a historian descended in the fifth degree from King Ethelred, [inter Script. post Bedam, pp. 831–850,] is full of them. The following passage of his history, if literally translated, would read very like Saxon poetry—‘Abstrahuntur tunc | ferventes fide | anno in eodem | Hibernia stirpe | tres viri lecti; | furtim consuunt lebnum | taurinis byris; | alimentum sibi | hebdomadarium supplent; | elevant dies | per vela septem totidemque noctes,’ &c.

We do not see any marks of studied alliteration in the old Saxon poetry; so that we might attribute the introduction of that practice to the Danes, if we were certain that it made a part of the Scaldic versification at the time of the Danish settlements in England.

However that may have been, Giraldus Cambrensis [‘Descr. Camb.’ p. 889,] speaks of ‘annomination,’ which he describes to be what we call alliteration, as the favourite rhetorical figure of both the Welsh and English in his time. ‘Adeo igitur hoc verborum ornatu duæ nationes, Angli scil. et Cambri, in omni sermone exquisito utuntur, ut nihil ab his eleganter dictum, nullum nisi rude et agreste censeatur eloquium, si non schematis hujus limâ plene fuerit expolitum.’ It is plain that alliteration must have had very powerful charms for the ears of our ancestors, as we find that the Saxon poetry, by the help of this embellishment alone, even after it had laid aside its pompous phraseology, was able to maintain itself, without

obliged for both to the Normans, who very early* distinguished themselves by poetical performances in their vulgar tongue.

The metres which they used, and which we seem to have borrowed from them, were plainly copied from the Latin † rhythmical verses, which, in the declension of that language, were

rhyme or metre, for several centuries. See Dr Percy's *Essay on the Metre of Pierce Plowman's Visions*, 'Rel. of Ancient Poetry,' vol. ii.

* I cannot find that the French antiquaries have been able to produce any poetry in any of the dialects of their language of an earlier date than the conquest of England, or, indeed, than the beginning of the twelfth century. However, we read of a Thibaud de Vernun, canon of Rouen, who, before the year 1053, 'multorum gesta Sanctorum, sed et St Wandregesaili, a sua latinitate transtulit, atque in communis lingua usum satis facunde refudit, ac sic, ad quamdam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem, urbanas ex illis cantilenas edidit.' [De Mirac. St Vulframni. Auctore Monacho Fontanell. temp. Will. I. ap. Dacherii Acta SS. Ord. Ben. t. iii. p. 379.] It is probable, too, that the 'vulgares cantus,' which, according to Raimond de Agiles ['Gesta Dei,' p. 180,] were composed against Arnoulph, a chaplain of the Duke of Normandy, in the first crusade, were in the French language; and there can be little doubt that William IX., Duke of Aquitain, upon his return from Jerusalem in 1101, made use of his native tongue when 'miserias captivitatis suæ, ut erat jocundus et lepidus, multotiens retulit rythmicis versibus cum facetis modulationibus.' ('Ord. Vital.' l. x. p. 793.) The history of the taking of Jerusalem, which is said to have been written by the Chevalier Gregoire Bechada, of Tours, in Limoges, 'materna lingua, rythmo vulgari, ut populus pleniter intelligeret,' [Labbe, 'Bibl. Nov.' t. ii. p. 296,] has not yet been brought to light, so that probably the oldest French poem of any length now extant is a translation of the 'Bestiarus,' by Philippe de Thaun, it being addressed to Aliz (Adeliza of Louvain,) the second queen of our Henry I.

There is a copy of this poem among the Cotton MSS. Nero. A. v. The authors of the 'Histoire Littéraire de la France,' t. ix. pp. 173–190, suppose it to have been written about 1125, that is, thirty years before 'Le Brut,' which Fauchet had placed at the head of his list of French poems.

I shall take occasion in another place to shew that the real author of 'Le Brut' was Wace, (the same who wrote the 'Roman de Rou,') and not Wistace, as Fauchet calls him.

† The Latin rhythmical verses resembled the metrical in the number of syllables only, without any regard to quantity. 'Arma cano virunque qui primus Trojæ ab oris' would pass for a very good rhythmical hexameter. The greatest part, however, of these compositions were in imitation of the iambic and trochaic metres; and in them, if the accents fell luckily, the unlearned ear would often be as well pleased as if the laws of quantity were observed. The two rhythmical hymns quoted by Beda ['De Metris,'

current in various forms among those who either did not understand, or did not regard, the true quantity of syllables; and the practice of rhyming * is probably to be deduced from the same edit. Putch. p. 2380,] are sufficient to prove this. The first, he observes, 'ad instar iambici metri pulcherrime factus est.'

'O Rex aeternae Domine,
Rerum creator omnium,' &c.

The other is 'ad formam metri trochaici.'

'Apparebit repentina dies magna Domini
Fur obscuræ velut nocte improvviso occupans.'

In the former of these hymns, 'Domine,' to a modern ear at least, sounds as well as 'nomine'; and in the latter, 'dies' and 'velut,' being accented upon their first syllables, affect us no other wise than 'dices' and 'velum' would have done.

From such Latin rhythms, and chiefly those of the iambic form, the present poetical measures of all the nations of Roman Europe are clearly derived. Instead of long and short syllables, the feet of our poetry are composed of syllables accented and unaccented, or rather of syllables strongly and less strongly accented; and hence it is that we have so little variety of feet, and consequently of metres; because the possible combinations of syllables accented and unaccented are, from the nature of speech, much more limited in point of number, than the combinations of long and short syllables were in the Greek and Latin languages.

* We see evident marks of a fondness for rhyme in the hymns of S. Ambrosius and S. Damasus, as early as the fourth century. One of the hymns of Damasus, which begins,

'Martyris ecce dies Agathie
Virginis emicat oximiae,' &c.

is regularly rhymed throughout. Prudentius, who had a more classical taste, seems studiously to have avoided rhymes; but Sedulius and Fortunatus, in the fifth and sixth centuries, use them frequently in their hymns. See their works, and a hymn of the latter ap. Fabric. Bib. Med. Etat. v. Fortunatus.

The learned Muratori, in his dissertation 'De Rythmica Veterum Poesi,' ['Antiq. Med. Etvi,' Dissert. xl.] has collected together a vast heap of examples which prove that rhymes were very generally used in hymns, sequences, and other religious compositions in Latin, in the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries; so that for my own part I think it is probable that the poets in the vulgar languages (who first appeared about the ninth century) borrowed their rhymes from the Latin poetry of that age, as it is evident that they did the forms of their versification.

Otfried of Weissenberg, the earliest rhymer that is known in any of the modern languages, about the year 870, calls rhyme, in the style of the

original, as we find that practice to have prevailed in ecclesiastical hymns, and other compositions, in Latin, some centuries before Otfrid of Weissenberg, the first known rhymer in any of the vulgar European dialects.

§ II. I wish it were in my power to give a regular history of the progress which our ancestors made in this new style of versification ; but,* except a few lines in the 'Saxon Chronicle' upon Latin grammarians, 'Schema om̄æotteleuton' [Praef. ad Liutbert. ap. Schilter. Thes. Antiq. Teuton, t. i. p. 11.] And when the monk, who has been cited in note * p. lxiv., says, that Thibaud de Vernun composed his songs 'ad quam-dam tinnuli rythmi similitudinem,' he must mean, I think, that he composed them 'in imitation of [Latin] jingling rhythm.' I say Latin, or at least some foreign rhythm, because otherwise he would rather have said in 'rythmo tinnulo.' The addition of the epithet 'tinnulus' seems to shew plainly enough that 'rythmus' alone did not then signify what we call rhyme.

* William of Malmesbury [De Gest. Pont. Angl. l. iii. p. 271] has preserved two rhyming verses of Aldred, Archbishop of York, which that prelate threw out against one Urse, Sheriff of Worcestershire, not long after the Conquest. 'Hatest thou Urse—Have thou God's curse.' 'Vocaris Ursus—Habeas Dei maledictionem.' Malmesbury says that he inserts this English, 'quod Latina verba non sicut Anglicæ concinnitati respondent.' The 'concinnity,' I suppose, must have consisted in the rhyme, and would hardly have been thought worth repeating, if rhyme in English had not then been a novelty.

The lines in the 'Saxon Chronicle,' to which I mean to refer, are in p. 191, ed. Gibs. The passage begins—

'*Laytelar he let þyncean.
þealme men ƿyðe ƿyndean.*'

All the lines are not in rhyme ; but I shall set down a few, in English characters, which I think could not have chimed together so exactly by mere accident—

'*Thet he nam be rihte
And mid mycelan un-rihte
Of his leode
For littelre neede—
He sette mycel dœr-frith,
And he lægde laga ther with—
He forbad tha heortas,
Swylce eac tha baras ;
Swa swiðhe he lufode tha hea-dœr
Swylce he ware heora fadar.
Eac he sette be tham haran,
That hi mosten freo faran.*'

The concluding lines are—

'*Sæ mihtiga God
Kithe his caule mild-heortnisse
And do him his synna forgifenesse.*'

the death of William the Conqueror, which seem to have been intended for verses of the modern fashion, and a short canticle, which, according to Matthew Paris,* the blessed Virgin was pleased to dictate to Godric, a hermit near Durham, I have not been able to discover any attempts at rhyming poetry, which can with probability be referred to an earlier period than the reign of Henry the Second. In that reign Layamon,† a priest of Ernleye, near Severn, as he calls himself, translated (chiefly) from the French of Wace ‡ a fabulous history of the Britons, entitled ‘Le

The writer of this part of the ‘Chronicle’ (as he tells us himself, p. 189) had seen the Conqueror.

* ‘Hist. Angl.’ p. 100. Godric died in 1170, so that, according to tradition, the canticle was prior to that period. The first stanza being incorrectly printed, I shall only transcribe the last.

‘Seinte Marie, Christes bur,
Meidenees cloenhad, moderes flur,
Dile mine sennen, rixe in min mod,
Bringe me to wiune with selfe God.’

‘Hoc canticum,’ says M. P., ‘potest hoc modo in Latinum transferri.’

‘Sancta Maria, Christi thalamus,
Virginalis puritas, matris flos,
Dele mea crimina, regna in mente mea,
Duc me ad felicitatem cum solo Deo.’

Upon the authority of this translation I have altered ‘pinne’ (as it is in the print) to ‘winne.’ The Saxon *p* is often mistaken for a *p*.

† This work of Layamon is extant among the Cotton MSS. Cal. A. ix. A much later copy, in which the author, by a natural corruption, was called ‘Laweman,’ was destroyed by the fire. There is an account of both copies in Wanley’s Cat. MSS. Septent. p. 228 and p. 237.

The following short extract from fol. 7, 8, containing an account of the sirens which Brutus met with in his voyage, will serve to support what is said in the text of this author’s intermixing rhymes with his prose.

‘Ther heo funden the Merminnen,
That beoth deor of muceli giunen.
Wismen hit thunchet ful iwiſ,
Bineothe thon gurdle hit thunceth fise.
Theo habbeth swa murie song,
Ne beo tha dai na swa long,
Ne bith na man weri
Heora songes to heran.’

‡ The French clerk, whom Layamon professes to have followed in his history, is called by Wanley [Cat. MSS. Sept. p. 228] ‘Wate;’ as if poor ‘Maistre Wace’ were doomed to have his name perpetually mistaken. Fauchet, and a long string of French antiquaries, have agreed to call him

Brut,' which Wace himself, about the year 1155, had translated from the Latin of Geoffrey of Monmouth. Though the greatest

'Wistace.' I shall here, in justice to 'Maistre Wace,' (for whom I have a great respect, not only as a very ancient but as a very ingenious rhymer,) state my reasons shortly for believing that he was the real author of that translation in French verse of Geoffrey of Monmouth's romance, which is commonly called 'Le Brut.'

In the first place, his name is distinctly written in the text of three MSS. of very considerable antiquity. Two of them are in the Museum—viz., Cotton. Vitell. A. x., and Reg. 13 A. xxi. The third is at Cambridge, in the Library of Bennet College, n. 58. In a fourth MS., also in the Museum, Harl. 6508, it is written 'Gazce,' and 'Gace,' by a substitution of G for W, very usual in the French language.

Secondly, in the MS. above mentioned of Layamon's history, Cal. A. ix., if I may trust my own eyes, the name is 'Wace,' and not 'Wate,' as Wanley read it. The Saxon τ is not very unlike a c. What Layamon has said further, 'that this Wace was a French clerk, and presented his book to Alienor, the Queen of Henry' [the Second,] agrees perfectly well with the date of 'Le Brut,' (in 1155, according to all the copies,) and with the account which Wace himself, in his 'Roman de Rou,' has given of his attachment to Henry.

Thirdly, in a subsequent translation of 'Le Brut,' which was made by Robert of Brunne in the beginning of the fourteenth century, he repeatedly names 'Mayster Wace' as the author (or rather translator from the Latin) of the French history. See Hearne's 'App. to Pref. to Peter Langtoft,' p. xcviij.

In opposition to this strong evidence in favour of Wace, we have nothing material, except the MS. of 'Le Brut' quoted by Fauchet ['de la Langue Françoise,' l. ii.] in which, according to his citation, the author is called 'Wistace.' The later French writers who have called him so, I apprehend, have only followed Fauchet. The reader will judge whether it is not more probable that the writer of the MS., or even Fauchet himself, may have made a little slip in this matter, than that so many MSS. as I have quoted above, and the successive testimonies of Layamon and Robert of Brunne, should have concurred in calling the author of 'Le Brut' Wace, if that had not been his true name.

I will just add, that 'La Vie de Saint Nicholas,' which is frequently quoted by Hickes, ['Gr. A. S.' pp. 146, 149, &c.], was probably a work of this same Wace, as appears from the following passage. [MS. Bodl. 1687, v. 17 from the end:—

'Ci faut le livre mestre Guace,
Qui ad de Saint Nicholas fait,
De Latin en Romaunz estreit
A Osbord le fiz Thlout,
Qui Saint Nicholas mout amout.'

And I should suspect that 'Le Martyre de St George, en Vers François, par

part of this work of Layamon resembles the old Saxon poetry, without rhyme or metre, yet he often intermixes a number of short verses of unequal lengths, but rhyming together pretty exactly, and in some places he has imitated not unsuccessfully the regular octosyllable measure of his French original.

§ III. It may seem extraordinary, after these proofs that the art of rhyming was not unknown or unpractised in this country in the time of Henry II., that we should be obliged to search through a space of above an hundred years, without being able to meet with a single maker of English rhymes whom we know to have written in that interval. The case I suspect to have been this. The scholars of that age (and there were many who might fairly be called so in the English dominions abroad * as well as at home) affected to write only † in Latin, so that we do not find that they ever composed, in verse or prose, in any other language.

Robert Guaco,' mentioned by M. Lebeuf as extant in the Bibl. Colbert. Cod. 3745, [Mem. de l'Acad. D. J. et B. L. t. xvii. p. 731.] ought to be ascribed to the same author, as Guaco is a very strange name. The Christian name of Wace was Robert. See Huet, 'Orit. de Caen,' p. 412.

* The following passage of Roger de Hoveden [p. 672] gives a striking description of the extent of the English dominions in the reign of Richard I.:—‘Sciendum est quod tota terra, quaæ est ab Anglia usque in Hispaniam, secus mare, videlicet Normannia, Britannia, Pictavia, est de dominio Regis Angliæ.’ The kings of France at that time were not possessed of an inch of territory upon the coasts of the ocean.

† It will be sufficient to name John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, Joseph of Exeter, Gerald Barry, Nigell Wireker, Geffrey Vinsauf. I should add to this list Walter Map, if there were not a tradition, not entirely destitute of probability, that he was the author of the ‘Roman de Saint Graal’ in French. I find this in an old MS. of Tristan, Bib. Reg. 20, D. ii. p. antep.:—‘Quant Boort ot conte laventure del Saint Graal, teles come eles estoient avenues, eles furent mises en escrit, gardees en lanere de Salibieres, dont Mestre Galtier Maplestreet a faire son livre du Saut Graal, por lamor du roy Herri son seignor, qui fist lestorie tralater del Latin en Romanz.’ The adventure of the Saint Graal is plainly written upon a very different plan from the other Romances of the Round Table, and is likely enough to have come from an ecclesiastic, though rather, I confess, from a graver one than Walter Map may be supposed to have been. The French romance, from which our romance called ‘Mort d’Arthur’ is translated, seems to be an injudicious jumble of ‘Le Brut,’ ‘Lancelot,’ ‘Tristran,’ the ‘Saint Graal,’ and some other romances of less note, which were all, I apprehend, originally separate works.

On the other hand, they who meant to recommend themselves by their poetry to the favour of the great, took care to write in French, the only language which their patrons understood; and hence it is that we see so many French poems,* about that time, either addressed directly to the principal persons at the English court, or at least written on such subjects as we may suppose to have been most likely to engage their attention. Whatever, therefore, of English poetry was produced in this infancy of the art, being probably the work of illiterate authors and circulating only among the vulgar,† we need not be much surprised that no more of it has been transmitted down to posterity.

* ‘Le Bestiaire,’ by Philippe de Thaun, addressed to Queen Adelisa; ‘Le Brut’ and ‘Le Roman de Rou,’ by Wace, have been mentioned above. Besides the ‘Roman de Rou,’ there is another ‘Chronicle of Normandy’ in French verse, by Maitre Beneit, compiled by order of Henry II., [MS. Harl. 1717.] The same Beneit was, perhaps, the author of the ‘Vie de St Thomas,’ [MS. Harl. 3755,] though he there calls himself

‘Frere Beneit, le pecheour,
Ove les neirs dras.’

At the end of a copy of ‘Le Brut,’ Bib. Reg. 13 A. xxi., there is a continuation of the history to the death of William II., in the same metre, by a Geffrei Gaimar, which escaped the observation of Mr Casley; and at the end of another copy, Vitell. A. x., the history is continued by an anonymous author to the accession of King John.

Richard I. composed himself in French. A specimen of his poetry has been published by Mr Walpole, ‘Cat. of Royal Authors,’ v. i. And his Chancellor, William Bishop of Ely, (who, as has been observed before, ‘was totally ignorant of the English language,’) was by no means behind-hand with his master in his encouragement of French poets; for of this bishop the passage in Hoveden is to be understood which Mr Walpole has applied to the king himself. It is part of a letter of Hugh Bishop of Coventry, who, speaking of the Bishop of Ely, says, that he, ‘ad augmentum et famam sui nominis, emendicata carmina et rythmos adulatores comparabat, et *de regno Francorum* cantores et joculatores muneribus allegerat, ut de illo canerent in plateis; et jam dicebatur ubique, quod non erat talis in orbe.’—Hoveden, p. 103.

† To these causes we may probably impute the loss of those songs upon Hereward, (the last, perhaps, of the Saxon heroes,) which, according to Ingulphus, ‘were sung about the streets’ in his time.—‘Hist. Croyl,’ p. 68. Robert of Brunne also mentions a ‘rhyme’ concerning Gryme the Fisher, the founder of Grymesby, Hanelok the Dane, and his wife Golde-

§ IV. The learned Hickes, however, has pointed out to us two very curious pieces, which may with probability be referred to this period. The first of them is a paraphrase of the gospel histories, entitled 'Ormulum,'* by one Orm, or Ormin. It seems to burgh, daughter to a King Athelwold; who all now, together with their bard,

' Illacrymabiles
Urgentur ignotique long&
Nocta.'

See translation of Peter of Langtoft, p. 25, and Camden's 'Brit.', p. 569.

* The 'Ormulum' seems to be placed by Hickes among the first writings after the Conquest, ['Gram. Ang. Sax.', c. xxii., p. 165.] but I confess I cannot conceive it to have been earlier than the reign of Henry II. There is a peculiarity in the author's orthography, which consists in doubling the consonants; e.g., brother, he writes 'brotherr'; after, 'affterr,' &c. He has done this by design, and charges those who shall copy his book to be very careful to write those letters twice, which he has written so, as otherwise, he assures them, 'they will not write the word right.' Hickes has taken notice of this peculiarity, but has not attempted to explain the author's reasons for it; and, indeed, without a more perfect knowledge than we now probably can have of the Saxon pronunciation, they seem totally inexplicable. In the few lines which I think it necessary to quote here as a specimen of the metre, I shall venture (first begging Ormin's pardon for disregarding his injunction) to leave out the superfluous letters, and I shall also, for my own ease as well as that of the reader, transcribe them in modern characters. The first lines of Wanley's extract from MS. Bod., Junius, 1, [Cat. Codd., MSS. Septent., p. 59.] will answer my purpose as well as any other:—

'Nu, brother Walter, brother min after the fleshes kinde,
And brother min i Cristendom thurh fulluh and thurh trowthe,
And brother min i Godes hus yet o the thridre wise,
Thurh that wit hafen taken be an reghel boc to folghen.
Under kanunkes-had and lif swa sum Sant Awstin sette,
Ic hafe don swa sum thi had, and "forbed" † te thin wille,
Ic hafe wend intil English godspelles halighe lare,
After that little wit that me min Drinten hafeth lened.'

The reader will observe that, in calling these verses of fifteen syllables, I consider the words 'kinde,' 'trowthe,' 'wise,' 'sette,' 'wille,' 'lare,' as dissyllables.

The laws of metre require that they should be so considered, as much as 'folghen' and 'lened'; and for the same reason 'thridre' in ver. 3, and 'hafe' in ver. 6 and 7, are to be pronounced as consisting of two syllables.

It is the more extraordinary that neither Hickes nor Wanley should have perceived that Ormin wrote in metre, as he himself mentions his having

† 'Forthed,' MS.

have been considered as mere prose by Hickes and by Wanley, who have both given large extracts from it; but, I apprehend, every reader who has an ear for metre will easily perceive that it is written very exactly in verses of fifteen syllables, without rhyme, in imitation of the most common species of the Latin tetrameter iambic. The other piece,* which is a moral poem upon old age, &c. is in rhyme, and in a metre much resembling the former, except that the verse of fifteen syllables is broken into two, of which the first should regularly contain eight and the second seven syllables; but the metre is not so exactly observed, at least in the copy which Hickes has followed, as it is in the 'Ormulum.'

§ V. In the next interval, from the latter end of the reign of Henry III., to the middle of the fourteenth century, when we may suppose Chaucer was beginning to write, the number of English rhymers seems to have increased very much. Besides several, whose names we know,† it is probable that a great part added words for the sake of 'filling' his 'rhyme,' or 'verse,' for he calls it by both those names in the following passages:—

'Ic hafe sott her o this boc among Godspelles wordes
All thurh me selfon manig word, the 'rime' swa to 'fillen.'

And again—

'And ic ne mihte noht min 'fers' ay with Godspelles wordes
Wel 'fillen' all, and all forthi sholdc ic wel ofte nede
Among Godepelles wordes dou min word, min 'fers' to 'fillen.'

It is scarce necessary to remark, that 'rime' is here to be understood in its original sense, as denoting the whole verse, and not merely the consonancy of the final syllables. In the second quotation 'fers,' or 'verse,' is substituted for it as a synonymous term. Indeed I doubt whether, in the time of Ormin, the word 'rhyme' was, in any language, used singly to convey the idea of consonant terminations.

* A large extract from this poem has been printed by Hickes [‘Gram. Ang. Sax.’ c. xxiv. p. 222], but evidently from very incorrect MSS. It begins thus:—

'Ic am nu elder thanne ic wes
A wintre and ec a lorn;
Ic ealdri moro thanne ic dode,
Mi wit oghte to bi moro.'

† Robert of Gloucester and Robert of Brunne have been mentioned already.

To these may be added Richard Rolle, the hermit of Hampole, who died in 1349, after having composed a large quantity of English rhymes. See Tanner, ‘Bib. Brit.’ art. Hampole.—Laurence Minot, who has left

of the anonymous authors, or rather translators,* of the popular poems, which (from their having been originally written in the a collection of poems upon the principal events of the former part of the reign of Edward III. MS. Cotton. Galba. E. ix.—Within the same period flourished the two poets, who are mentioned with great commendations by Robert of Brunne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt.' p. xcix.] under the names 'Of Erceldoun and of Kendale.' We have no memorial, that I know, remaining of the latter, besides this passage ; but the former I take to have been the famous Thomas Leirmouth, of Ercildoun (or Ersilton, as it is now called, in the shire of Merch,) who lived in the time of Edward I., and is generally distinguished by the honourable addition of 'The Rhymer.' As the learned editor of 'Ancient Scottish Poems,' Edinburgh 1770, has, for irrefragable reasons, deprived this Thomas of a prophecy in verse, which had usually been ascribed to him, [see Mackenzie, art. 'Thomas Rhymour,'] I am inclined to make him some amends by attributing to him a romance of 'Sir Tristrein ;' of which Robert of Brunne, an excellent judge [in the place above cited] says—

'Over gestes it has th' esteem,
Over all that is or was,
If men it sayd as made Thomas.'

* See Dr Percy's curious 'Catalogue of English Metrical Romances,' prefixed to the third volume of 'Reliques of Ancient Poesy.' I am inclined to believe that we have no English romance, prior to the age of Chaucer, which is not a translation or imitation of some earlier French romance. The principal of those, which, being built upon English stories, bid the fairest for having been originally composed in English, are also extant in French. A considerable fragment of 'Hornchild,' or 'Dan Horn,' as he is there called, is to be found in French Alexandrines in MS. Harl. 527. The first part of 'Guy of Warwick' is in French, in the octosyllable metre, in MS. Harl. 3775, and the last part in the same language and metre in MS. Bib. Reg. 8 F. ix. How much may be wanting I have not had opportunity to examine. I have never seen 'Bevis' in French ; but Du Fresnoy, in his 'Biblioth. des Romans,' t. ii. p. 241, mentions a MS. of 'Le Roman de Beuves de Hantonne,' and another of 'Le Roman de Beuves et Rosiane, en Rhyme ;' and the Italians, who were certainly more likely to borrow from the French than from the English language, had got among them a romance 'di Buovo d'Antona' before the year 1348. Quadrio, 'Storia della Poesia,' t. vi. p. 542.

However, I think it extremely probable that these three romances, though originally written in French, were composed in England, and perhaps by Englishmen ; for we find that the general currency of the French language here engaged several of our own countrymen to use it in their compositions. Peter of Langtoft may be reckoned a dubious instance, as he is said by some to have been a Frenchman ; but Robert Grosseteste, the famous Bishop of Lincoln in the time of Henry III., was a native of Suffolk,

Roman, or French, language) were called romances, flourished about this time. It is unnecessary to enter into particulars here concerning any of them, as they do not appear to have invented, or imported from abroad, any new modes of versification, by which

and yet he wrote his 'Chasteau d'Amours,' and his 'Manuel des Pechées' in French. [Tanner's 'Bib. Brit.' and Hearne's 'Pref. to Rob. of Gloucester,' p. lviii.] There is a translation of 'Cato' in French verse by Helis de Guincester, *i. e.* Winchester, MS. Harl. 4388, and a romance also in French verse, which I suppose to be the original of the English 'Ipomedon,' [Percy's Cat. n. 22,] by Hue de Rotelande, is to be found in MS. Cotton. Vesp. A. vii.—A French dialogue in verse, MS. Bod. 3904, entitled, 'La pleinte par entre mis Sire Henry de Lacy Counte de Nichole et Sire Wauter de Bybelesworth pur la croiserie en la terre Seinte,' was most probably composed by the latter, who has also left us another work in French prose. [See his article in Tanner, 'Bibl. Brit.'].—Even as late as the time of Chaucer, Gower wrote his 'Speculum Meditantis' in French, but whether in verse or prose is uncertain. John Stowe, who was a diligent searcher after MSS., had never seen this work ['Annals,' p. 326]: nor does either Bale or Pits set down the beginning of it, as they generally do of the books which they have had in their hands. However, one French poem of Gower's has been preserved. In MS. Harl. 3869, it is connected with the 'Confessio Amantis' by the following rubric: 'Puisqu'il ad dit cidevant en Englois par voie d'essample la sotie de celui qui par amours aime par especial, dirra ore apres en Francois a tout le monde en general une traitie selone les auctours, pour essampler les amants marriez, au fin q'ils la foi de leurs seints espousailles pourront par fine loialte garder, et al honeur de Dieu salvement tenir.' Pr. 'Le Creatour de toute creature.' It contains lv. stanzas of seven verses each, in the last of which is the following apology for the language:—

‘Al’ universite de tout le monde
Johan Gower ceste balado envoie,
Et se jeo nai de Francois la faconde,
Pardonetz moi que jeo de ceo forsvole;
Jeo suis Englois, se quier par tiele voie
Estre excuse.’

Chaucer himself seems to have had no great opinion of the performances of his countrymen in French. [Prol. to 'Test. of Love,' ed. 1542] 'Certes' (says he) 'there ben some that speke theyr poysy mater in Frenche, of whyche speche the Frenche men have as good a fantasye, as we have in hearing of French mennes Englyshe.' And he afterwards concludes with his usual good sense—'Let then clerkes endyten in Latyn, for they have the properte of science and the knowinge in that faculte; and lette Frenchmen in theyr Frenche also endytle theyr queynt termes, for it is kyndly to theyr mouthes; and let us shewe our fantasyes in suche wordes as we lerneden of our dames tonge.'

the art could be at all advanced,* or even to have improved those which were before in use. On the contrary, as their works were intended for the ear more than for the eye, to be recited rather than read, they were apt to be more attentive to their rhymes than to the exactness of their metres, from a presumption, I suppose, that the defect, or redundancy, of a syllable might be easily covered in the recitation, especially if accompanied, as it often was, by some musical instrument.

* It was necessary to qualify the assertion, that the rhymers of this period 'did not invent or import from abroad any new modes of versification,' as, in fact, Robert of Brunne (in the passage referred to in note † p. lxxii.) has mentioned three or four sorts of verse, different from any which we have hitherto met with, and which appear to have been much cultivated, if not introduced, by the writers who flourished a little before himself. He calls them 'couwee,' 'strangere,' 'enterlace,' and 'baston.' Mr Bridges, in a sensible letter to Thomas Hearne [App. to Pref. to Peter Langt' p. ciii.], pointed out these terms as particularly 'needing an explanation'; but Thomas chose rather to stuff his book with accounts 'of the nunnery at Little Gidding,' &c., which cost him only the labour of transcribing. There can be little doubt, I think, that the rhymes called 'couwée' and 'enterlacée' were derived from the 'versus caudati' and 'interlaqueati' of the Latin rhymers of that age. Though Robert of Brunne in his prologue professes not to attempt these elegancies of composition, yet he has intermixed several passages in rhyme 'couwée'; [see pp. 266, 273, 6, 7, 8, 9, *et seq.*] and almost all the latter part of his work from the Conquest is written in rhyme 'enterlacée,' each couplet rhyming in the middle as well as at the end. [This was the nature of the 'versus interlaqueati,' according to the following specimen, MS. Harl. 1002:—

'Plausus Grecorum | lux oecis et via claudis
Incolum | virgo dignissima laudis.]'

I cannot pretend to define the exact form of the rhyme called 'baston,' but I dare say it received its appellation from the Carmelite, Robert Baston, a celebrated Latin rhymer in the reigns of Edwards I. and II. [See Tanner, 'Bibl. Brit.' in v. and Hearne's 'Pref. to Fordun,' p. ccxxvi, *et seq.*] His verses upon the battle of Bannockburn, in 1313, are printed in the Appendix to Fordun, p. 1570. They afford instances of all the whimsical combinations of rhymes which can well be conceived to find a place in the Latin heroic metre.

As to rhyme 'strangere,' I suspect (upon considering the whole passage in Robert of Brunne,) that it was rather a general name, including all sorts of uncommon rhymes, than appropriated to any particular species.

Upon the whole, if this account of these new modes of versification shall be allowed to be anything like the truth, I hope I shall be thought justified in having added 'that the art could not be at all advanced by them.'

§ VI. Such was, in general, the state of English poetry at the time when Chaucer probably made his first essays. The use of rhyme was established; not exclusively (for the author of the ‘Visions of Pierce Ploughman’ wrote after the year 1350* without rhyme,) but very generally; so that in this respect he had little to do but to imitate his predecessors. The metrical part of our poetry was capable of more improvement, by the polishing of the measures already in use as well as by the introducing of

* This is plain from fol. 68, edit. 1550, where the year 1350 is named as a year of great scarcity. Indeed, from the mention of the Kitten in the tale of the ‘Rattons,’ fol. iii., iv., I should suspect that the author wrote at the very end of the reign of Edward III., when Richard was become heir apparent.

The ‘Visions of (*i. e.*, concerning) Pierce Ploughman’ are generally ascribed to one Robert Langland; but the best MSS. that I have seen make the Christian name of the author, William, without mentioning his surname. So in MS. Cotton, Vesp. B. xvi. at the end of p. 1, is this rubric:—‘Hic incipit secundus passus de visione Willelmi de Petro Plouhman.’ And in ver. 5 of p. 2, instead of ‘And sayde, *Sonne*, slepest thou?’ the MS. has, ‘And sayde, *Wille*, slepest thou?’ See also the account of MS. Harl. 2376, in the Harleian Catalogue.

I cannot help observing that these ‘Visions’ have been printed from so faulty and imperfect a MS., that the author, whoever he was, would find it difficult to recognise his own work. However, the judgment of the learned doctors, Hickes and Percy, [‘Grain. A. S.’ p. 217.—‘Rel. of Anc. Poet.’ v. ii. p. 260,] with respect to the laws of his versification, is confirmed by the MS. Each of his verses is, in fact, a distich, composed of two verses, after the Saxon form, without rhyme, and not reducible to any certain metre. I do not mean to say that a few of his verses may not be picked out, consisting of fourteen and fifteen syllables, and resembling the metre used in the ‘Ornulum,’ and there are still more of twelve and thirteen syllables which might pass for very tolerable Alexandrines; but then, on the other hand, there is a great number of his verses (warranted for genuine by the best MSS.) which cannot, by any mode of pronunciation, be extended beyond nine or ten syllables, so that it is impossible to imagine that his verse was intended to consist of any determinate number of syllables. It is as clear that his accents, upon which the harmony of modern rhythm depends, are not disposed according to any regular system. The first division of a verse is often trochaic, and the last iambic, and *vice versa*. The only rule which he seems really to have prescribed to himself, is what has been taken notice of by his first editor, viz., ‘to have three wordes at the leaste in every verse whiche beginne with some one letter.’ (Crowley’s Pref. to Edit. 1550.)

new modes of versification; and how far Chaucer actually contributed to the improvement of it, in both or either of these particulars, we are now to consider.

§ VII. With respect to the regular metres then in use, they may be reduced, I think, to four. First, the long iambic metre,* consisting of not more than fifteen, nor less than fourteen syllables,

* The most perfect example of this metre has been given above, note * p. lxxi from the 'Ormulum.' Each verse is composed of fifteen syllables, and broken by a cæsura at the eighth, which always terminates a word. The accents are so disposed upon the even syllables, particularly the eighth and fourteenth, as to produce the true iambic cadence.

The learned reader will recollect that the 'Political Verses,' as they are called, of Tzetzes, and others, who wrote when the Greek versification was become rhythmical instead of metrical, are chiefly of this form. See Du Cange, v. *Politici Versus*. And it is remarkable, that, about the time of our Orm, Ciullo d'Alcamo, a poet of Sicily, where the Greek was still a living language, [Montf. Palaeog. Gr. l. vi.] made use of these verses of fifteen syllables, intermixed with hendecasyllables, in the only production of his which has been preserved, 'Raccolta dell' Allacci,' pp. 408-16. The first stanza is quoted by Crescimbeni, [Istor. d. V. P. l. i. p. 3.] who, however, labours very much to persuade us that the verses in question ought not to be considered as verses of fifteen syllables, but as containing each of them two verses, the one of eight and the other of seven syllables. If this were allowed, the nature of the verse would not be altered: [See before,] but the supposition is highly improbable, as by that distribution there would be three verses in each stanza not rhyming. In what follows, Crescimbeni shews very plainly that he had not adverted to the real nature of Ciullo's measure, for he compares it with the noted tetrameter, 'Gallias Caesar subegit, Nicomedes Cæsarem,' which is a trochaic, whereas these verses of Ciullo are evidently iambics, like those of Orm.

I suspect that, if we could recover the genuine text of Robert of Gloucester, he would be found to have written in this metre. It was used by Warner, in his 'Albion's England' (another Chronicle in verse) in the latter, end of Queen Elizabeth's reign; and Gascoigne about the same time ['Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse in Eng.' Signature U. ii.] speaks of the couplet, consisting of one verse of twelve and another of fourteen syllables, as 'the commonest sort of verse' then in use. It may be proper to observe, that the metre, which Gascoigne calls a verse of fourteen syllables, is exactly the same with what is called above a verse of fifteen syllables; just as the French Alexandrine may be composed indifferently of twelve or thirteen syllables, and the Italian hendecasyllable of ten, eleven, or even twelve. The general rule in all these kinds of verse is that, when they consist of the greater number of syllables, the superfluous syllables, as they may be called, are never accented.

and broken by a cæsura at the eighth syllable. Secondly, the Alexandrine metre,* consisting of not more than thirteen syllables, nor less than twelve, with a cæsura at the sixth. Thirdly, the octosyllable metre; which was in reality the ancient dimeter iambic. Fourthly, the stanza of six verses; of which the first, second, fourth, and fifth, were in the complete octosyllable metre; and the third and last catalectic, *i. e.*, wanting a syllable, or even two.

§ VIII. In the first of these metres, it does not appear that Chaucer ever composed at all, (for, I presume, no one can imagine that he was the author of ‘Gamelyn,’) or in the second; and in the fourth we have nothing of his but the rhyme of ‘Sir Topas,’ which, being intended to ridicule the vulgar romancers, seems to

* Robert of Brunne, in his translation of ‘Peter of Langtoft,’ seems to have used the Alexandrine verse in imitation of his original; but his metre (at least in Hearne’s copy) is frequently defective, especially in the latter part of his work, where he affects to rhyme at the cæsura as well as at the end of his verse.

The Alexandrine metre is generally agreed to have been first used in the ‘Roman d’Alexandre,’ by Lambert li Cors and Alexandre de Bernay, toward the latter end of the twelfth century. (Du Verdier, ‘Bibl.’ p. 780. Fauchet, l. ii.) A late French antiquary (M. l’Eveque de la Ravaliere,) in his history ‘Des Révolutions de la Langue Françoise,’ p. 165, has combated this opinion, upon the authority of some Alexandrine verses which he has discovered, as he supposes, in the ‘Roman de Rou.’ I shall only observe, that no such verses are to be found in a very good MS. of the ‘Roman de Rou,’ ‘Bib. Reg.’ 4 C. xi., and I very much suspect that, upon an accurate examination, they will appear to have been not the work of Wace, but of some later author. A similar mistake of an interpolation, or continuation, for the original work has led another very able antiquary of the same nation to place the ‘Roman de Rou’ in the fourteenth century. ‘Mem. de l’Acad. des I. et B. L.’ tom. xv. p. 582. There can be no doubt that Wace wrote the ‘Roman de Rou’ about the middle of the twelfth century. See before, note ‡ p. lxvii.

They who attend only to the length of the Alexandrine verse, will naturally derive it from the trimeter iambic rhythms, which were in frequent use in the beginning of the twelfth century. See ‘Orderic. Vital.’ l. ii. pp. 404, 409, 410, 415, *et al.* But when it is considered that the cæsura at the sixth syllable, so essential to the Alexandrine metre, was hardly ever observed in the trimeter iambic, it will seem more probable, I think, that the inventor of the Alexandrine took for his model, what has been called above the long iambic, but, for some reason or other, retrenched a foot, or two syllables, in the first hemistich.

have been purposely written in their favourite metre. In the third, or octosyllable metre,* he has left several compositions; particu-

* Though I call this the octosyllable metre, from what I apprehend to have been its original form, it often consists of nine, and sometimes of ten syllables; but the eighth is always the last accented syllable.

The oldest French poems, to the latter end of the twelfth century, are all in this metre; but upon the invention of the Alexandrine, the octosyllable verse seems by degrees to have been confined to the several species of lighter compositions in which it is still used. Here in England, Robert of Brunne, in his preface to his translation of 'Le Brut,' [App. to Pref. to 'Peter Langtoft,' p. c.] calls it 'light rhyme,' in contradistinction to 'strange rhyme,' of which he has just enumerated several sorts, [see note * p. lxxv.] and says that he wrote in it 'for luf of the lewed man'; and Chaucer himself speaks of it in nearly the same terms in the beginning of the third book of the 'House of Fame':—

‘God of science and of light,
Apollo, thurgh thy grete might
This little last book now thou gye;
Not that I will for maystrye
Here art potential be shewde;
But, for the rhyme is light and lewde,
Yet make it somewhat agreeable,
Though some verse fayle in a syllable.’

The learned Editor of a part of 'The Canterbury Tales' [London, 1737, Svo] has quoted this passage [Pref. p. xxv.] as proving, 'by Chaucer's own confession, that he did not write in equal measure.'

It certainly proves that he did not write in equal measure in this particular poem of the 'House of Fame'; but it proves also that he knew well what the laws of measure were, and that he thought that any deviation from them required an apology. Is it just to conclude, because Chaucer has owned a neglect of those laws in one work, written in light metre, and in which he formally disclaims any exertion of art, [ver. 4, 5.] that therefore he has been equally negligent of them in his other works, written in the gravest metre, and in which he may reasonably be supposed to have employed his utmost skill of versification? In the 'Troilus,' for instance, [b. v.] he has a solemn prayer 'that none miswrite or mismetre his book.' Can we suppose that it was not originally written in metre? But I shall not enter any further into the general argument concerning Chaucer's versification, which will more properly be discussed in the text. My business here was only to prevent the reader from coming to the question with a preconceived opinion (upon the authority of the learned Editor above mentioned) that 'Chaucer himself,' in this passage of the 'House of Fame,' 'has put the matter out of dispute.'

To return again to the octosyllable metre. Its constitution is such that the first syllable may often be dropped without much prejudice to the harmony of the verse; and, as far as I have observed, that is the syllable

larly, 'an imperfect translation of the Roman de la Rose,' which was probably one of his earliest performances ; 'The House of Fame ;' 'The Death of the Duchess Blanche,' and a poem called his 'Dream : ' upon all which it will be sufficient here to observe, in general, that, if he had given no other proofs of his poetical faculty, these alone must have secured to him the pre-eminence above all his predecessors and contemporaries, in point of versification.

§ IX. But by far the most considerable part of Chaucer's works is written in that kind of metre which we now call the heroic,*

in which Chaucer's verses of this kind generally fail. We have an instance in the first line of the passage quoted above :—

‘God of science and of light,’
sounds as well (to my ear at least) as—
‘Thou God of science and of light,’

according to Mr Urry's correction. The reason, I apprehend, is that the measure, though of another sort, is still regular ; instead of a dimeter iambic, it is a dimeter trochaic catalectic.

But no such liberty can be taken in the heroic metre without totally destroying its harmony ; and therefore when the above-mentioned learned Editor says [Pref. p. xxv.] that the numbers of Chaucer 'are always musical whether they want or exceed their complement,' I doubt his partiality for his author has carried him too far. I have no conception myself that a heroic verse which wants a syllable of its complement can be musical, or even tolerable. The line which he has quoted from the 'Knight's Tale,' [ver. 1228 of this Edition]—

‘Not in purgatory but in helle’—
however you manage it, (whether you make a pause, or give two times to the first syllable, as he rather advises,) can never pass for a verse of any form. Nor did Chaucer intend that it should. He wrote (according to the best MSS.)—

‘Not only in purgatory but in helle.’

* The heroic metre with us, as with the Italians, is of the iambic form, and consists of ten, eleven, or twelve syllables ; the tenth, however, being in all cases the last accented syllable. The French have the same metre ; but with them it can scarce contain more than eleven syllables, as their language has few (if any) words in which the accent is laid upon the antepenultimate. Though we have a great number of such words, we seldom use the verse of twelve syllables. The extraordinary difficulty of rhyming with three syllables is a sufficient reason for excluding it from all works which are written in rhyme ; and in blank metre the two unaccented

either in distichs or in stanzas; and as I have not been able to discover any instance of this metre being used by any English poet before him, I am much inclined to suppose that he was the first introducer of it into our language. It had long been practised in France, in the northern as well as the southern provinces; and in Italy, within the last fifty years before Chaucer wrote, it had been cultivated with the greatest assiduity and success, in preference to every other metre, by Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. When we reflect that two of Chaucer's juvenile productions, the 'Palamon and Arcite,' and the 'Troilus,' were in a manner translated from the 'Theseida' and the 'Filostrato' of Boccaccio,*

syllables at the end make the close of the verse heavy and languid. Milton, for the sake of variety of measure, has inserted a very few of these verses, which the Italians call 'sdruccioli,' in his heroic poems; but they are more commonly, and, I think, more properly employed in dramatic compositions, where a continued stateliness of numbers is less requisite.

The generical name for this metre in Italy is 'endecasyllabo,' and the verses of ten and twelve syllables are distinguished by additions; the former being called 'endecasyllabo tronco,' and the latter 'endecasyllabo sdrucciolo.' This proves, I think, that the verse of eleven syllables was the primitive metre, and principally used, as it still is, in Italy; and it will appear hereafter, if I am not mistaken, that the greatest part of Chaucer's heroic verses, when properly written and pronounced, are in this measure.

* It is so little a while since the world has been informed, that the 'Palamon and Arcite' of Chaucer was taken from the 'Theseida' of Boccaccio, that it would not have been surprising if another century had elapsed without our knowing that our countryman had also borrowed his 'Troilus' from the 'Filostrato' of the same author, as the 'Filostrato' is more scarce, and much less famous, even in Italy, than the 'Theseida.' The first suspicion which I entertained of this theft was from reading the title of the 'Filostrato' at large, in 'Saxii Hist. Lit. Typog. Mediolan.' ad an. 1498; and I afterwards found, in Montfaucon's Bibl. MSS. t. ii. p. 793, among the King of France's MSS., one with this title, 'Philostrato, dell' Amoroze Fatiche di Troilo, per Gio Boccaccio.' See also Quadrio, t. vi., p. 473. I had just employed a person to procure me some account of this MS. from Paris, when I had the good fortune to meet with a printed copy in the very curious collection of the Reverend Mr Crofts. The title is, 'Il Fylostrato, che Tracta de lo Innamoramento de Troylo e Gryseida: et de molte altre infinite battaglie. Impresso nella inclita citta de Milano per magistro Uldericho Scinzenzeler nell anno M.CCCCCLXXXVIII a di xxvii di mese de Septembre, in 4°.' By the favour of the learned owner (who is as free in the communication as he has been zealous in the collection of his

both written in the common Italian hendecasyllable verse, it cannot but appear extremely probable that his metre also was copied from the same original; and yet I cannot find that the form of his stanza in the 'Troilus,' consisting of seven verses, was ever used by Boccaccio, though it is to be met with among the poems of the King of Navarre, and of the Provençal rhymers.* Whichever he shall be supposed to have followed, whether the French or Italians, it is certain that he could not want in either

literary treasures) I had soon an opportunity of satisfying myself that Chaucer was to the full as much obliged to Boccaccio in his 'Troilus' as in his 'Knight's Tale.'

The doubts which Quadrio mentions (t. vi. p. 474) whether the 'Filistrato' was really a work of Boccaccio, are sufficiently answered, as he observes, by the concurring testimony of several ancient MSS. which expressly name him as the author. And it may be remarked, that Boccaccio himself, in his 'Decameron,' has made the same honourable mention of this poem as of the 'Theseida'; though without acknowledging either for his own. In the introduction to the Sixth Day, he says that 'Dioneo insieme con Laurette di Troilo et di Chriseida cominciarono cantare,' just as afterwards, in the conclusion of the Seventh Day, we are told that the same 'Dioneo et la Fiammetta gran pezza cantarono insieme d'Arcita et di Palemone.'

* See 'Poësies du Roi de Navarre,' Chans. xvi. xviii. xxvii. xxxiv. lviii. The only difference is that the last two verses, which in Chaucer's stanza form a distinct couplet, are made by Thibaut to rhyme with the first and third. In a MS. of Provençal poetry (in the collection of the Reverend Mr Crofts), I find one piece by Folket de Marseilles, who died about 1213, in which the stanza is formed exactly agreeable to Chaucer's.

This stanza of seven verses, being first introduced, I apprehend, by Chaucer, was long the favourite measure of the poets who succeeded him. In the time of Gascoigne it had acquired the name of 'rhythme royll'; 'and surely,' says he, 'it is a royll kinde of verse, serving best for grave discourses.' [Instruction Concerning the Making of Verse.' Sign. U. i b.] Milton, in some of his juvenile compositions, has made the last verse of this stanza an Alexandrine.

As the 'Theseida' and the 'Filostrato' of Boccaccio are both written in the octave stanza, of which he is often, though improperly, called the inventor [see Pasquier, 'Recherches,' l. vii. c. 3.] it seems extraordinary that Chaucer should never have adopted that stanza. Even when he uses a stanza of eight verses (as in the 'Monk's Tale,') it is constituted very differently from the Italian octave. I observe, by the way, that Chaucer's stanza of eight verses, with the addition of an Alexandrine, is the stanza in which Spenser has composed his 'Faery Queen.'

language a number of models of correct and harmonious versification ; and the only question will be, whether he had ability and industry enough to imitate that part of their excellency.

§ X. In discussing this question, we should always have in mind that the correctness and harmony of an English verse depend entirely upon its being composed of a certain number of syllables, and its having the accents of those syllables properly placed. In order, therefore, to form any judgment of the versification of Chaucer, it is necessary that we should know the syllabical value, if I may use the expression, of his words, and the accentual value of his syllables, as they were commonly pronounced * in his time ; for without that knowledge, it is not more probable that we should determine justly upon the exactness of his metres, than that we should be able to cast up rightly an account stated in coins of a former age, of whose current rates and denominations we are totally ignorant.

§ XI. Let us consider a moment, how a sensible critic in the Augustan age would have proceeded, if called upon to examine a work of Ennius.† When he found that a great proportion of the verses were strictly conformable to the ordinary rules of metre,

* Mons. l'Eveque de la Ravalier, in his discourse ‘De l’Ancienneté des Chansons Françoises,’ prefixed to the ‘Poësies du Roi de Navarre,’ has the same observation with respect to the old French poets :—‘Leur poësie,’ says he, p. 227, ‘marque combien ils respectoient cette règle [of exact rhyming] ; mais pour en juger aujourd’hui, *ainsi que de la mesure de leurs vers*, il faut prononcer les mots comme eux.’ He is vindicating the ancient French bards from an unjust and ignorant censure of Boileau, in his ‘Art. Poet.’ Chant. i. So that, it should seem, a great poet is not of course a judicious antiquary. See above, note §, p. xxxix., a censure of Chaucer’s verse by our Dryden, who was certainly a ‘great poet.’

† Though Ennius died not an hundred and fifty years before what may be called the age of Augustus, his language and versification are so different from those of Ovid, for instance, that I much question whether his poems were better relished, or even understood, by the vulgar Romans in that age, than the works of Chaucer are now by the generality of readers. However, a great many of his verses are as smoothly turned as those of Ovid himself, and it is well known that Virgil has not scrupled to incorporate several of them into his divine ‘Æneid.’ At the same time, whoever casts an eye over the fragments of his ‘Annals,’ as collected by Columna, Hesselius, and others, will find frequent examples of all the seeming irregularities alluded to in the text.

he would, probably, not scruple to conclude that such a conformity must have been produced by art and design, and not by mere chance. On the other hand, when he found that in some verses the number of feet, to appearance, was either deficient or redundant ; that in others the feet were seemingly composed of too few or too many syllables, of short syllables in the place of long, or of long in the place of short ; he would not, I think, immediately condemn the old bard, as having all at once forgotten the fundamental principles of his art, or as having wilfully or negligently deviated from them. He would first, I presume, inquire whether all these irregularities were in the genuine text of his author, or only the mistakes of copyists ; he would inquire further, by comparing the genuine text with other contemporary writings and monuments, whether many things which appeared irregular were not in truth sufficiently regular, either justified by the constant practice, or excused by the allowed licence of the age : where authority failed, he would have recourse, but soberly, to etymology and analogy ; and if, after all, a few passages remained, not reducible to the strict laws of metre by any of the methods above mentioned, if he were really (as I have supposed him) a sensible critic, he would be apt rather to expect patiently the solution of his difficulties from more correct manuscripts, or a more complete theory of his author's versification, than to cut the knot, by deciding peremptorily, that the work was composed without any regard to metrical rules.

§ XII. I beg leave to pursue the same course with respect to Chaucer. The great number of verses, sounding complete even to our ears, which is to be found in all the least corrected copies of his works, authorises us to conclude that he was not ignorant of the laws of metre. Upon this conclusion it is impossible not to ground a strong presumption that he intended to observe the same laws in the many other verses which seem to us irregular ; and if this was really his intention, what reason can be assigned sufficient to account for his having failed so grossly and repeatedly, as is generally supposed, in an operation, which every balladmonger in our days, man, woman, or child, is known to perform with the most unerring exactness, and without any extraordinary fatigue ?

§ XIII. The offences against metre in an English verse, as has partly been observed before, must arise either from a superfluity or deficiency of syllables, or from the accents being improperly placed.

§ XIV. With respect to the first species of irregularity, I have not taken notice of any superfluities in Chaucer's verses but what may be reduced to just measure by the usual practices* of even modern poets. And this, by the way, is a strong proof of his real attention to metrical rules; for, otherwise, if he had written without any restraint of that kind, a certain proportion of his deviations from measure must, in all probability, have been on the side of excess.

§ XV. But a great number of Chaucer's verses labour under an apparent deficiency of a syllable or two. In some of these perhaps the defect may still be supplied from MSS., but for the greatest part I am persuaded no such assistance is to be expected;† and, therefore, supposing the text in these cases to be correct, it is worth considering whether the verse also may not

* It is unnecessary to trouble the reader with an enumeration of syncope, apostrophus, synecphonesis, &c.

‘Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria vatum.’

They may all, I think, be comprehended in our language under this one general principle, that an English verse, though chiefly composed of feet of two syllables, is capable of receiving feet of three syllables in every part of it, provided only one of the three syllables be accented.

In short, whoever can taste the metrical harmony of the following lines of Milton will not be embarrassed how to dispose of the (seemingly) superfluous syllables which he may meet with in Chaucer.

- ‘P. L.’ ii. 123. Óminous | conjecture on the whole success.
- 302. A pil | lax of state | ; deep on his front engraven.
- 658. Celestial spir | its in bón | dage, nór the abyss.
- v. 495. No inconvenienc di | et nor tóo | light fare.
- vii. 122. Things not revealed, which the invis | ible King.

† I would not be thought to undervalue the MSS., which I have not seen, or to discourage those who may have inclination and opportunity to consult them; I only mean to say that, where the text is supported (as it generally is in this edition) by the concurrence of two or three good MSS., and the sense is clear and complete, we may safely consider it as tolerably correct. In the course of the notes I shall have occasion to point out several passages, in which either the disagreement of the good MSS. or the obscurity of their readings, makes a further inquiry absolutely necessary in order to settle the text.

be made correct, by adopting in certain words a pronunciation, different, indeed, from modern practice, but which, we have reason to believe, was used by the author himself.

For instance, in the genitive case, singular and plural number of nouns, (which, as has been remarked above, in the time of Chaucer had the same expression,) there can be no doubt that such words as 'shoures,' ver. 1, 'croppes,' ver. 7, 'shires,' ver. 15, 'lordes,' ver. 47, &c., were regularly pronounced as consisting of two syllables. Whenever they are used as monosyllables, it must be considered as a poetical licence, warranted, however, even then (as we may presume from the natural progress of our language) by the practice of inaccurate speakers in common conversation.

In like manner, we may be sure that 'ed,' the regular termination of the past tense and its participle, made, or contributed to make, a second syllable in the words, 'perced,' ver. 2, 'bathed,' ver. 3, 'loved,' ver. 45, 'wered,' ver. 75, &c.* The first step

* It appears from the preface to the last edition of Chaucer's works, Lond. 1721, that Mr Urry, the undertaker of that edition, had the same opinion with respect to the pronunciation of the final syllables in this and the last-mentioned instance; and that it was his intention to distinguish those syllables, 'whenever they were to be pronounced,' by printing them with an 'i,' instead of an 'e,' as 'shouris,' 'shiris,' 'lovid,' 'percid,' &c. As such a distinction is entirely unsupported by the MSS., and must necessarily very much disfigure the orthography of the language, I cannot think that an editor has right to introduce it upon ever so plausible a pretence. A shorter and (in my opinion) a less exceptionable method would have been to have distinguished the syllables of this sort, whenever they were to be contracted, by adding a sign of a syncope, thus: 'shoure's,' 'shire's,' 'perce'd,' 'love'd.' But, after all, a reader who cannot perform such operations for himself, had better not trouble his head about the versification of Chaucer.

Mr Urry had also discovered that the final 'e' (of which I shall treat more at large in the next Section) often made a syllable in Chaucer's verse; and (according to the preface quoted above) he 'always marked with an accent, when he judged it necessary to pronounce it; as, "swetè," "halvè," "smalè," ver. 5, 8, 9.' I have the same objection to this mark that I have to innovations in orthography; and besides, that it would be apt to mislead the ignorant reader, (for whom only it can be intended,) by making him suppose that the 'e' so marked was really to be accented, whereas the true 'e' feminine is always to be pronounced with an obscure, evanescent sound, and is incapable of bearing any stress or accent.

toward reducing words of this form to monosyllables seems to have been to shorten the last syllable, either by transposing the final letters, as in ‘wolde,’ ver. 144, ‘sayde,’ ver. 763, &c.; or by throwing away the ‘d,’ as in ‘coste,’ ver. 1910, ‘caste,’ ver. 2083, &c. In both these cases the words still remained of two syllables, the final ‘e’ being sounded as an ‘e’ feminine; but they were prepared to lose their last syllable by the easy licence of changing an ‘e’ feminine into an ‘e’ mute, or of dropping it entirely, according to the modern practice.

§ XVI. But nothing will be found of such extensive use for supplying the deficiencies of Chaucer’s metre as the pronunciation of the ‘e’ feminine; and as that pronunciation has been for a long time totally antiquated, it may be proper here to suggest some reasons for believing (independently of any arguments to be drawn from the practice of Chaucer himself) that the final ‘e’ in our ancient language was very generally pronounced, as the ‘e’ feminine is at this day by the French.

With respect to words imported directly from France, it is certainly quite natural to suppose that for some time they retained their native pronunciation; whether they were nouns substantive, as ‘hoste,’ ver. 753, ‘face,’ ver. 1580, &c.; or adjectives, as ‘large,’ ver. 755, ‘strange,’ ver. 13, &c.; or verbs, as ‘grante,’ ver. 12,756, ‘preche,’ ver. 12,327, &c.; and it cannot be doubted, that in these and other similar words in the French language, the final ‘e’ was always pronounced, as it still is, so as to make them disyllables.

We have not indeed so clear a proof of the original pronunciation of the Saxon part * of our language; but we know, from general

* This is owing to the Saxons not having left us any metrical compositions, as has been observed before, p. lxxvi. Hickes complains [‘Gr. A. S.’ c. xxiii. § 7] ‘that it is difficult to know of how many syllables a Saxon verse sometimes consists, for this reason among others, “quod non constat quomodo voces in ‘e’ feminino vel obscuro terminatæ pronuntiandæ sunt in carmine.”’ He might, perhaps, with more propriety, have complained that it is difficult to know how words ending in ‘e’ feminine are to be pronounced in a Saxon verse, because it is uncertain of how many syllables any of their verses consisted. I have mentioned in the text two cases of words abbreviated, in which I think we might conclude from general reasoning that the final ‘e’ was pronounced. As this theory, with respect to these words, is en-

observation, that all changes of pronunciation are usually made by small degrees; and therefore, when we find that a great number of those words which in Chaucer's time ended in 'e' originally ended in 'a,' we may reasonably presume that our ancestors first passed from the broader sound of 'a' to the thinner sound of 'e' feminine, and not at once from 'a' to 'e' mute. Besides, if the final 'e' in such words was not pronounced, why was it added? From the time that it has confessedly ceased to be pronounced it has been gradually omitted in them, except where it may be supposed of use to lengthen or soften * the preceding syllable, as in 'hope,' 'name,' &c. But according to the ancient orthography, it terminates many words of Saxon original, where it cannot have been added for any such purpose, as, 'herte,' 'childe,' 'olde,' 'wilde,' &c. In these, therefore, we must suppose that it was pronounced as an 'e' feminine, and made part of a second syllable; and so, by a parity of reason, in all others, in which, as in these, it appears to have been substituted for the Saxon 'a.'

Upon the same grounds, we may presume that in words terminated, according to the Saxon form, in 'en,' such as the infinitive modes and plural numbers of verbs, and a great variety of adverbs and prepositions, the 'n' only was at first thrown away, and the 'e,' which then became final, continued for a long time to be pronounced as well as written.

tirely confirmed by the practice of Orm (the most authentic metrical composer that we have in our ancient language,) it would not perhaps be unreasonable to infer that the practice of Orm, in other words of Saxon original, in which the final 'e' is pronounced, is consonant to the old Saxon usage. However that may be, the practice of Orm must certainly be admitted to prove that such a pronunciation prevailed at least one hundred and fifty years before Chaucer.

* In most of the words in which the final 'e' has been omitted, its use in lengthening or softening the preceding syllable has been supplied by an alteration in the orthography of that syllable. Thus, in 'grete,' 'mete,' 'stele,' 'rede,' 'dere,' in which the first 'e' was originally long, as closing a syllable, it has (since they have been pronounced as monosyllables) been changed either into 'ea,' as in 'great,' 'meat,' 'steal,' 'read,' 'dear,' or into 'ee,' as in 'greet,' 'meet,' 'steel,' 'reed,' 'deer.' In like manner the 'o' in 'bote,' 'fole,' 'dore,' 'gode,' 'mone,' has been changed either into 'oa,' as in 'boat,' 'foal,' or into 'oo,' as in 'door,' 'good,' 'moon.'

These considerations seem sufficient to make us believe that the pronunciation of the 'e' feminine is founded on the very nature of both the French and Saxon parts of our language; and, therefore, though we may not be able to trace the reasons of that pronunciation in all cases so plainly as in those which have been just mentioned, we may safely, I think, conclude with the learned Wallis,* that what is generally considered as an 'e' mute in our language, either at the end or in the middle of words,† was an-

* 'Gram. Ling. Ang.', c. i. § 2. 'Originem vero hujus "e" muti, ne quis miretur unde devenerit, hanc esse judico: Nempe, quod antiquitus pronunciatum fuerit, sed obscuro sono, sicut Gallorum "e" femininum.' He afterwards adds: 'Certissimum autem hujus rei indicium est ex antiquis poetis petendum; apud quos repertur illud "e" promiscue vel constitutere vel non constituere novam syllabam, prout ratio carminis postulaverit.' So that, according to this judicious writer (who has confessedly searched much deeper into the formation of vocal sounds in general, and the pronunciation of the English language in particular, than any of our other grammarians), I might have assumed as certain, the point which I have been labouring in the text (by arguments drawn from reason and analogy) to render probable.

There is much more to this purpose in Wallis, *loc. cit.*, which I should transcribe, if I did not suppose that his book is in the hands of every one who is likely to be curious upon this subject. I will only take notice of one passage which may be wrested to his disadvantage. From considering the gradual extinction of the 'e' feminine in our language, and observing that the French, with whom he conversed, very often suppressed it in their common speech, he has been led to predict that the pronunciation of it would perhaps shortly be disused among them as among ourselves. The prediction has certainly failed; but notwithstanding, I will venture to say, that at the time when it was made it was not unworthy of Wallis's sagacity. Unluckily for its success, a number of eminent writers happened, at that very time, to be growing up in France, whose works, having since been received as standards of style, must probably fix for many centuries the ancient usage of the 'e' feminine in poetry, and of course give a considerable check to the natural progress of the language. If the age of Edward III. had been as favourable to letters as that of Louis XIV.; if Chaucer and his contemporary poets had acquired the same authority here that Corneille, Molière, Racine, and Boileau have obtained in France—if their works had been published by themselves, and perpetuated in a genuine state by printing, I think it probable that the 'e' feminine would still have preserved its place in our poetical language at least, and certainly without any prejudice to the smoothness of our versification.

† The reasoning in the text concerning the final 'e' is equally applicable to the same vowel in the middle of words. Indeed (as Wallis has observed,

ciently pronounced, but obscurely, like the 'e' feminine of the French.

§ XVII. The third kind of irregularity to which an English verse is liable is from the accents being misplaced. The restoring of Chaucer's words to their just number of syllables, by the methods which have been pointed out above, will often be of signal service in restoring his accents also to their proper places; but further, in many words, we must be cautious of concluding too hastily that Chaucer accented the same syllables that we do. On the contrary, I am persuaded that in his French words he most commonly laid his accent according to the French custom (upon the last syllable, or the last but one in words ending in 'e' feminine,) which, as is well known, is the very reverse of our practice. Thus in ver. 3, he uses 'licoúr' for 'liquéour;' ver. 11, 'corágés' for 'coúrages;' ver. 22, again, 'corágé' for 'coúrage;' ver. 37, 'resón' for 'réason;' ver. 77, 'viáge' for 'vóyage;' ver. 109, 110, 'viságe—úsage' for 'vízage—úsage;' ver. 140, 'manérę' for 'mánnérę;' ver. 186, 'labouře' for 'lábour;' ver. 204, 'prelát' for 'prélate;' ver. 211, 'langáge' for 'lánguage;' ver. 212, 'mariáge' for 'márriage;' ver. 216, 'contrée' for 'coúntry;' and so through the whole work.

In the same manner he accents the last syllable of the participle present, as, ver. 885, 6, 'wedding—comíng,' for 'wédding—cóm-ing;' ver. 903, 'livíng' for 'líving;' ver. 907, 8, 'comíng—cryíng' for 'cóm-ing—cryíng;' ver. 998, 'brenning' for 'brénning,' &c.;

loc. cit.) 'vix uspiam in medio dictionis reperitur "e" mutum, quod non ab origine fuerit finale.' If therefore it was pronounced while final, it would probably continue to be pronounced notwithstanding the addition of a syllable. If it was pronounced in 'swete,' 'trewē,' 'large,' 'riche,' it would be pronounced in 'swetely,' 'trewely,' largely,' 'richely.' [See ver. 123 and 3219, ver. 775 and 3692, ver. 2740 and 3034, ver. 1014 and 1913.] In another very numerous set of words (French verbals ending in 'ment') the pronunciation of this middle 'e' is countenanced, not only by analogy, but also by the still subsisting practice in the French language. So Chaucer certainly pronounced the words 'jugement,' ver. 780, 807, 820; 'commandement,' ver. 2871, 2981; 'amendment,' ver. 4183; 'pavement,' 'avisement,' ver. 4505, 6. Even Spenser in the same canto (the 8th of b. v.) uses 'attонement' and 'avengement' as words of four syllables [St. 21, 8, 30, 5]; and Wallis takes notice that the middle 'e' in 'commandement' was pronounced in his time.

and as he does this in words of Saxon as well as of French growth, I should suppose that the old participle of the present tense ending in ‘and’ was originally accented upon that syllable, as it certainly continued to be by the Scotish poets a long time after Chaucer. See Bp. Douglas, ‘Virg.’ p. 18, ver. 18, ‘spryngánd;’ ver. 51, ‘beránd;’ p. 27, ver. 49, ‘fleánd;’ p. 29, ver. 10, ‘seánd.’

These instances are all taken from the rhyming syllables (where a strong accent is indispensably necessary) in order to prove beyond contradiction that Chaucer frequently accented his words in the French manner. But if he followed this practice at the end of his verses, it is more than probable that he did the same in the middle, whenever it gave a more harmonious flow to his metre; and, therefore, in ver. 4, instead of ‘vérture,’ I suppose he pronounced ‘vertüe;’ in ver. 11, instead of ‘náture,’ ‘natüre;’ in ver. 25, instead of ‘avénture,’ ‘aventüre;’ in ver. 46, instead of ‘hónour,’ ‘honour,’ &c.

It may be proper, however, to observe, that we are not to expect from Chaucer that regularity in the disposition of his accents, which the practice of our greatest poets, in the last and the present century, has taught us to consider as essential to harmonious* versification. None of his masters, either French or Italian, had set him a pattern of exactness† in this respect; and

* It is agreed, I believe, that, in our heroic metre, those verses, considered singly, are the most harmonious in which the accents fall upon the even syllables; but it has never, that I know, been defined how far a verse may vary from this its most perfect form and yet remain a verse. On the tenth (or rhyming) syllable a strong accent is, in all cases, indispensably required; and in order to make the line tolerably harmonious, it seems necessary that at least two more of the even syllables should be accented, the fourth being (almost always) one of them. Milton, however, has not subjected his verse even to these rules; and particularly, either by negligence or design, he has frequently put an unaccented syllable in the fourth place. See ‘P. L.’ b. iii., 36, 586; b. v., 413, 750, 874.

† It has been suggested above that Chaucer probably copied his heroic metre from Boccaccio. But neither Boccaccio nor any of the older Italian poets are exact in the disposition of their accents. Though their hendecasyllable metre is allowed by the best critics to be derived from the trimeter iambic catalectic, the perfection of it has never been determined, like that of our heroic metre, to consist in the conformity of its accents to

it is rather surprising, that, without rule or example to guide him, he has so seldom failed to place his accents in such a manner as to produce the cadence best suited to the nature of his verse.

§ XVIII. I shall conclude this long and (I fear) tedious Essay, with a Grammatical and Metrical Analysis of the first eighteen lines of 'The Canterbury Tales.' This will afford me an opportunity of illustrating at once a considerable part of that theory which I have ventured to propose in the preceding pages with regard to the language and versification of Chaucer. The remainder I shall take occasion to explain in a few notes upon particular passages.

THE BEGINNING OF 'THE CANTERBURY TALES.'*

- I. *Whanne*¹ that April wifh his *shouires*² *sote*³
- II. The droughte of Mār̄ch hath *pērced*¹ tō the *rōte*,²
- III. And *bāthed*¹ évery véine in *swiche*² *licoür*,³
- IV. Of whiche *vertue*¹ engéndred is the floúr;

the pure iambic measure.—'Quadrio,' l. ii., dist. iii., c. iv., part i. Nor does the King of Navarre always dispose his accents more agreeably to our present notions. It is probable, I think, that some fundamental differences in the three languages may have led each of the three nations to prefer a different form of constructing the same kind of verse.

* It will be observed that the text is here given as in the original, to which the notes are applicable.

L ¹ *Whanne*, SAX. *Hypænne*, is so seldom used as a *Dissyllable* by Chaucer, that for some time I had great doubts about the reading of this line. I now believe that it is right as here printed, and that the same word is to be pronounced as a *Dissyllable* in ver. 703 :—

'But with these reliken *whanne* that he fond.'

Thanne, a word of the same form, occurs more frequently as a *Dissyllable*. See vers. 12,260, 12,506, 12,721, 13,924, 15,282.—² *Shoures*, Dis., *Plural number*. See above, p. lxxxvi.—³ *Sote*. See ver. v.

II. ¹ *Perced*, Dia. *Participle of the Past Time*. See above, p. lxxxvi.—
² *Rote*, root.

III. ¹ *Bathed*, Dis. See II. 1.—² *Swiche*, such; from *Swilke*, SAX.—

³ *Licoür*, FR., has the accent upon the *last* syllable, after the French mode.

IV. ¹ *Vertue*, FR., may be accented in the same manner. There is an-

V. Whan Zéphirús eke wþth his *sóte*¹ bréthe
 VI. *Enspired*¹ háth in évery hólt and héthe
 VII. The téndre *cróppes*,¹ and the *yóngē*² sóonne,
 VIII. Háth in the Rám his *hálfē*¹ coúrs *yronne*,²
 IX. And *smále*¹ *fóules*² *máken*³ mélodíe,
 X. That *slépen*¹ *álle*² níght with ópen eye,
 XI. So príketh *hém*¹ *nature*² in *hir*³ *cordages* ;⁴

other way of preserving the harmony of this verse by making *whiche* (from *whilke*, SAX.) a *Dissyllable*. See vers. 1014, 3921, 5488, 6537. *Virtue* may then be pronounced, as it is now, with the accent on the *first*; the second syllable being incorporated with the first of *engendred*.

V. ¹ *Sote*, *swote*, *swete*, sweet, Dis. See vera. 3219, 3699, 3724, 3765, 3790.

VI. ¹ *Enspired*, Tris. *Part. of Past Time*.

VIL ¹ *Croppes*, Dis., *Pl. N.*, as *shoures*, I. ^{2—3} *Yonge*, Dis. See vers. 213, 666, 1013, 3233, 3273. It is used as a *Dissyllable* in the ‘*Ormulum*,’ Col. 230 :—

‘That wás god blane ful i wís till áre *yóngē* *génge*.’

Stronge and *Longe* are pronounced in the same manner. See vera. 2375, 2640, 2646, 3069, 3438, 3682.

VIII. ¹ *Halfe*, or *Halve*, Dis. The original word is *Halfen*. So *Selve*, from *Selfen*, is a *Dissyllable*, vers. 2862, 4535.—² *Yronne*; Run. *Part. of the Past Time*, with the Saxon prepositional particle *ge*, which in the MSS. of Chaucer is universally expressed by *y*, or *i*. In this Edition, for the sake of perspicuity, *y* only is used.

IX. ¹ *Smale*, Dis. See vers. 146, 2078, 6897, 10,207.—² *Foules*, Dis., as *Shoures*, I. ^{2—3} *Maken*; make. *Plural Number of the Present Tense*. See above, p. lvii.

X. ¹ *Slepen*, as *Maken*, IX. ^{2—3} *Alle*, Dis. See vera. 76, 348, 536, 1854, 2102.

XI. ¹ *Hem*; Them. It is constantly used so by Chaucer.—² *Nature* should perhaps be accented on the *last* syllable, (or rather the *last but one*, supposing it a *Trisyllable*), after the French manner, though in the present case the verse will be sufficiently harmonious if it be accented on the *first*. That Chaucer did often accent it after the French manner appears from vers. 8778, 9842, 11,657, 11,945, 12,229. In the same manner he accents *Figure*, vers. 2037, 2045. *Mesure*, vers. 8132, 8498. *Asture*, *Statüre*, vers. 8130, 8133. *Peintüre*, ver. 11,967. *Aventüre*, vers. 1188, 1237. *Creatüre*, vers. 2397, 4884, and many other words of the same form, derived from the French language.—³ *Hir*; Their. The Possessive Pronoun of the third Person Plural is variously written *Hir*, *Hire*, *Her*, and *Here*; not only in different MSS., but even in the same page of good MSS. There seems to be no reason for perpetuating varieties of this kind, which can

XII. Than *lóngen*¹ fólk to *góðn*² on pslgrimáges,
 XIII. And *pálmer'es*¹ fór to *séken*² strángē³ stróndes,
 XIV. To *sérve*¹ hálwes² coúthe³ in sóndry lónedes;
 XV. And spécially from every *shíres*¹ énde
 XVI. Of *Englelónd*¹ to Cánterbúry they *wénde*,²
 XVII. The hóly blísful mártyr fór to séke,
 XVIII. That hélm¹ hath *hólpen*,² whán that théy were *séke*.³

only have taken their rise from the unsettled state of our orthography before the invention of printing, and which now contribute more than any real alteration of the language to obscure the sense of our old authors. In this Edition, therefore, *Hir* is constantly put to signify *Their*; and *Hire* to signify *Her*, whether it be the Oblique case of the Personal Pronoun *She*, or the Possessive of the same Pronoun.—⁴ *Cordáge*, Fr., is to be accented on the *Penultima*. See before, p. xc., and also vera. 1947, 2215. To the other instances quoted in p. xc., add *Avantáge*, vers. 2449, 4566. *Brocáge*, ver. 3375. *Foráge*, ver. 3166. *Lindáge*, ver. 4270, 5419. *Serváge*, vers. 1948, 4788. *Costáge*, vers. 5831. *Paráge*, ver. 5832.

XII. ¹ *Longen*, as *Maken*. IX. ³—³ *Gon*, Infinitive Mode of *Go*, terminated in *n* according to the Saxon form. See above, p. lviii.

XIII. ¹ *Pálmer'es*, Dis. the *s* of the termination being cut out by Syncope, as it generally is in *Plural Nouns* of three syllables, accented upon the *first*, and in the *Past Tenses* and their *Participles of Verbs*, of the same description, ending in *ed*. The reason seems to be, that, where the Accent is placed so early, we cannot pronounce the final syllables fully, without laying more stress upon them, than they can properly bear.—³ *Seken*, as *Gon*, XII. ²—³ *Strange*, Dis. Fr. See before, p. lxxxvii.

XIV. ¹ *Serve*, Dis. from *Serven*, the *n* being thrown away before *b*. See above, p. lviii. and p. lxxxix.—³ *Halwes*. Sax. *halger*. The Saxon *g* is changed into *w*, as in *forwe*, *morrue*, and some others; though it generally passes into *y*. The derivatives from this same word afford us instances of both forms: *Holyness*, *Holyday*, All-Hallows-day.—³ *Couthe*, known. *The Participle of the Past Time* from *Connen*, to know. See before, note * p. lix.

XV. ¹ *Shires*, Dis. *Genitive Case Sing.* See before, p. lxxxvi.

XVI. ¹ *Englelond*, Trisyllable, from the Saxon *Englaland*.—³ The last foot consists of three syllables,

'—to Cán | terbúr | y they wende.'

See above, note * p. lxxxv.

XVIII. ¹ *Hem*; Them. See XI. ¹—³ *Holpen*, the *Participle of the Past Time*, from the Irregular Verb *Help*. See before, note * p. lvii.—³ *Seke*; Sick. As Chaucer usually writes this word *Sike*, we may suppose that in this instance he has altered the Orthography in order to make the rhyme more exact; a liberty with which he sometimes indulges himself, though much

more sparingly than his contemporary poets. The Saxon writers afford authority to justify either method of spelling, as they use both *Seoca* and *Sioca*.

I have hitherto considered these verses as consisting of *ten* syllables only; but it is impossible not to observe that, according to the rules of pronunciation established above, all of them, except the third and fourth, consist really of *eleven* syllables. This is evident at first sight in vers. 11, 12, 13, 14, and might be shewn as clearly, by authority or analogy, in the others; but as the *eleventh* syllable, in our versification, being unaccented, may always, I apprehend, be absent or present without prejudice to the metre, there does not seem to be any necessity for pointing it out in every particular instance.



AN INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE

TO

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

BY T. TYRWHITT.

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INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

§ I. THE dramatic form which Boccaccio gave to his collection of tales, or novels, about the middle of the fourteenth century,* must be allowed to have been a capital improvement of that species of amusing composition. The 'Decameron' in that respect, not to mention many others, has the same advantage over the 'Cento Novelle Antiche,' which are supposed to have preceded it in point of time, that a regular comedy will necessarily have over an equal number of single, unconnected scenes. Per-

* The action of the 'Decameron' being supposed in 1348, the year of the great pestilence, it is probable that Boccaccio did not set about his work till after that period. How soon he completed it is uncertain. It should seem, from the introduction to the fourth day, that a part (containing perhaps the first three days) was published separately; for in that introduction he takes pains to answer the censures which had been passed upon him by several persons who had read his novels. One of the censures is, 'that it did not become his age to write for the amusement of women,' &c. In his answer he seems to allow the fact that he was rather an old fellow, but endeavours to justify himself by the examples of ' Guido Cavalcanti et Dante Alighieri già vecchi et Messer Cino da Pistoia vecchissimo.' It appears, from a passage in the 'Laberinto d'Amore,' [ed. 1723, t. iii., p. 24.] that Boccaccio considered himself as an elderly man when he was a little turned of forty; and therefore the publication of the first part of the 'Decameron' may very well have been, as Salviati has fixed it, [V. Manni, '1st del Decam.', p. 144.] in 1353, when Boccaccio was just forty years of age. If we consider the nature of the work, and that the author, in his conclusion, calls it repeatedly 'lunga fatica,' and says that 'molto tempo' had passed between the commencement and the completion of it, we can hardly, I think, suppose that it was finished in less than ten years, which will bring the publication of the entire collection of novels, as we now have it, down to 1358.

haps, indeed, there would be no great harm, if the critics would permit us to consider the 'Decameron,' and other compositions of that kind, in the light of comedies not intended for the stage; at least we may venture to assume, that the closer any such composition shall copy the most essential forms of comedy, the more natural and defined the plan shall be; the more the characters shall be diversified; the more the tales shall be suited to the characters; so much the more conspicuous will be the skill of the writer, and his work approach the nearer to perfection.

§ II. 'The Canterbury Tales' are a work of the same nature with the 'Decameron,' and were, in all probability, composed in imitation of it, though upon a different and, in my opinion, an improved plan. It would be easy to shew that, in the several points above mentioned, Chaucer has either been more judicious, or more fortunate, than his master Boccaccio; but, waiving for the present* that disquisition, I shall proceed to the immediate object of this discourse, which is, in the first place, to lay before the reader the general plan of 'The Canterbury Tales,' as it appears to have been originally designed by Chaucer; and, secondly, to give a particular review of the several parts of that work, which are come down to us, as they are published in this Edition.

§ III. The general plan of 'The Canterbury Tales' may be

* I will only just mention what appear to me to be fundamental defects in the 'Decameron.' In the first place, the action is indefinite; not limited by its own nature, but merely by the will of the author. It might, if he had been so pleased, have as well comprehended twenty, or a hundred days, as ten; and therefore, though some frivolous reasons are assigned for the return of the company to Florence, we see too plainly that the true reason was, that the budget of novels was exhausted. Not to mention that every day after the first may properly be considered as containing a new action, or, what is worse, a repetition of the action of the former day. The second defect is in the characters, which are so nearly resembling to each other, in age, rank, and even natural disposition, that, if they had been strictly supported, their conversation must have been incapable of that variety which is necessary to carry the reader through so long a work. The third defect has arisen from the author's attempt to remedy the second. In order to diversify and enliven his narrations, he has made a circle of virtuous ladies and polite gentlemen hear and relate in their turns a number of stories, which cannot, with any degree of probability, be supposed to have been suffered in such an assembly.

learned in a great measure from the prologue which Chaucer himself has prefixed to them. He supposes there that a company of pilgrims, going to Canterbury, assemble at an inn in Southwark, and agree that, for their common amusement on the road, each of them shall tell at least one tale in going to Canterbury, and another in coming back from thence; and that he who shall tell the best tales, shall be treated by the rest with a supper upon their return to the same inn. This is shortly the fable. The characters of the pilgrims are as various as, at that time, could be found in the several departments of middle life; that is, in fact, as various as could, with any probability, be brought together, so as to form one company; the highest and the lowest ranks of society being necessarily excluded. It appears, further, that the design of Chaucer was not barely to recite the tales told by the pilgrims, but also to describe their journey, ‘and all the remnant of their pilgrimage’ [ver. 726]; including, probably, their adventures at Canterbury as well as upon the road. If we add, that the tales, besides being nicely adapted to the characters of their respective relaters, were intended to be connected together by suitable introductions, and interspersed with diverting episodes; and that the greatest part of them was to have been executed in verse; we shall have a tolerable idea of the extent and difficulty of the whole undertaking; and admiring, as we must, the vigour of that genius, which in an advanced age*

* Chaucer was born in 1328, and it is most probable, I think, that he did not begin his ‘Canterbury Tales’ before 1382, at the earliest. My reason is this. The queen, who is mentioned in the ‘Legend of Good Women,’ ver. 496, was certainly Anne of Bohemia, the first queen of Richard II. She was not married to Richard till the beginning of 1382, so that the ‘Legend’ cannot possibly be supposed of an earlier date than that year. In the ‘Legend’ [vers. 329–332, vers. 417–430,] Chaucer has enumerated, I believe, all the considerable works which he had then composed. It was to his purpose not to omit any. He not only does not mention ‘The Canterbury Tales,’ but he expressly names ‘The Story of Palamon and Arcite,’ and ‘The Life of Saint Cecilia,’ both which now make part of them, as separate compositions. I am persuaded, therefore, that in 1382 the work of ‘The Canterbury Tales’ was not begun; and if we look further, and consider the troubles in which Chaucer was involved for the five or six following years, by his connexions with John of Northampton, we can hardly suppose that it was much advanced before 1389, the sixty-first year of the author’s age.

could begin so vast a work, we shall rather lament, than be surprised, that it has been left imperfect.

§ IV. In truth, if we compare those parts of ‘The Canterbury Tales, of which we are in possession, with the sketch which has been just given of the intended whole, it will be found that more than one half is wanting. The prologue we have perhaps nearly complete, and the greatest part of the journey to Canterbury; but not a word of the transactions at Canterbury, or of the journey homeward, or of the epilogue, which, we may suppose, was to have concluded the work, with an account of the prize-supper and the separation of the company. Even in that part which we have of the journey to Canterbury, it will be necessary, in the following review, to take notice of certain defects and inconsistencies, which can only be accounted for upon the supposition that the work was never finished by the author.

§ V. Having thus stated the general plan of ‘The Canterbury Tales,’ I shall now, according to my promise, enter upon a particular review of those parts of them which are published in this Edition, beginning with ‘The Prologue.’

It seems to have been the intention of Chaucer, in the first lines of the prologue, to mark with some exactness the time of his supposed pilgrimage; but unluckily the two circumstances of his description, which were most likely to answer that purpose, are each of them irreconcileable to the other. When he tells us, that ‘the showers of April had pierced to the root the drought of March’ [vers. 1, 2,], we must suppose, in order to allow due time for such an operation, that April was far advanced; while, on the other hand, the place of the sun, ‘having just run half his course in the Ram’ [vers. 7, 8,], restrains us to some day in the very latter end of March; as the vernal equinox, in the age of Chaucer, according to his own treatise on the Astrolabe,* was computed to happen on the 12th of March. This difficulty may, and, I think, should, be removed by reading in ver. 8, ‘the Bull,’ instead of ‘the Ram.’† All the parts of the description

* In this particular the editions agree with the MSS., but in general the printed text of this treatise is so monstrously incorrect, that it cannot be cited with any safety.

† This correction may seem to be authorised, in some measure, by

will then be consistent with themselves, and with another passage [ver. 4425], where, in the best MSS., the 28th day of April is named as the day of the journey to Canterbury.

We will suppose, therefore, that the preceding day, the 27th of April, was the day on which the company assembled at the 'Tabard.' In what year this happened Chaucer has not thought fit to inform us.* Either he did not think it necessary to fix

Lidgate, who begins his continuation of 'The Canterbury Tales' in this manner :—

‘Whan bright Phebus passed was the Ram,
Midde of April, and into the Bull came.’

But the truth is, that Dan John wrote for the most part in a great hurry, and consequently without much accuracy. In the account which he proceeds to give of Chaucer's 'Tales,' he not only confounds the circumstances of description of the Sompnour and Pardoner, but he speaks of the latter as

‘Telling a tale to anger with the Frere.’
Story of Thebes, vers. 32-35.

* It is clear that, whether the pilgrimage were real or imaginary, Chaucer, as a poet, had a right to suppose it to have happened at the time which he thought best. He was only to take care, when the time was once fixed, that no circumstances were admitted into his poem which might clash, or be inconsistent with the date of it. When no particular date is assigned to a fable of this sort, we must naturally imagine that the date of the fable coincides with that of the composition; and, accordingly, if we examine 'The Canterbury Tales,' we shall not find any circumstances which do not perfectly suit with that period which has been stated in a former note as the probable time of Chaucer's beginning to compose them. The latest historical fact mentioned in them is the insurrection of Jack Straw [ver. 15,400], which happened in 1381; and the earliest, in which any person of the drama is concerned, is the siege of Algezir [vers. 56, 57], which began in August 1342, and ended with the taking of the city in March 1344. 'Mariana,' l. xvi. c. x. xi. The knight, therefore, may very well be supposed to have been at that siege, and also upon a pilgrimage to Canterbury in 1383 or thereabouts.

They who are disposed to believe the pilgrimage to have been real, and to have happened in 1383, may support their opinion by the following inscription, which is still to be read upon the inn, now called the 'Talbot,' in Southwark :—‘This is the inn where Sir Jeffrey Chaucer and the twenty-nine pilgrims lodged in their journey to Canterbury, anno 1383.’ Though the present inscription is evidently of a very recent date, we might suppose it to have been propagated to us by a succession of faithful transcripts from the very time; but, unluckily, there is too good reason to be assured that the first inscription of this sort was not earlier than the last

that point at all; or perhaps he postponed it, till the completion of his work should enable him to assign such a date to his fable, as should be consistent with all the historical circumstances which he might take occasion to introduce into it.

§ VI. A second point, intended to be defined in the prologue, is the number of the company; and this too has its difficulties. They are said in ver. 24 to have been nine and twenty, but it is not clear whether Chaucer himself is included in that number. They might, therefore, according to that passage, be thirty; but if we reckon the several characters, as they are enumerated in the prologue, we shall find them one and thirty:—1. a Knight; 2. a Squire; 3. a Yeoman; 4. a Prioress; 5. another Nun; 6, 7, 8. three Priests; 9. a Monk; 10. a Friar; 11. a Merchant; 12. a Clerk of Oxenford; 13. a Sergeant of the Law; 14. a

century. Mr Speght, who appears to have been inquisitive concerning this inn in 1597, has left us this account of it in his ‘Glossary,’ v. Tabard:—‘A jaquet, or sleevelesse coate, worne in times past by noblemen in the warres, but now onely by heraults, and is called theyre coate of armes in service. It is the signe of an inne in Southwarke by London, within the which was the lodging of the abbot of Hyde by Winchester. This was the hostelry where Chaucer and the other pilgrims mett together, and, with Henry Baily, their hoste, accorded about the manner of their journey to Canterbury. And whereas through time it hath bin much decaied, it is now by Master J. Preston, with the abbot’s house thereto adjoyned, newly repaired, and with convenient roomes much encreased, for the receipt of many guests.’

If any inscription of this kind had then been there, he would hardly have omitted to mention it; and, therefore, I am persuaded it has been put up since his time, and most probably when the sign was changed from the ‘Tabard’ to the ‘Talbot,’ in order to preserve the ancient glory of the house notwithstanding its new title. Whoever furnished the date, must be allowed to have at least invented plausibly.

While I am upon the subject of this famous hostelry, I will just add, that it was probably parcel of two tenements which appear to have been conveyed by William de Ludegarsale to the abbot, &c., de Hyda *juxta* Winton, in 1306, and which are described, in a former conveyance there recited, to extend in length, ‘a commun fossato de Suthwerke versus Orientem, usque Regiam viam de Suthwerke versus Occidentem.’ ‘Registrum de Hyde,’ MS. Harl. 1761, fol. 166-173. If we should ever be so happy as to recover the account-books of the Abbey of Hyde, we may possibly learn what rent Harry Baily paid for his inn, and many other important particulars.

Franklin; 15. a Haberdasher; 16. a Carpenter; 17. a Webbe; 18. a Dyer; 19. a Tapiser; 20. a Cook; 21. a Shipman; 22. a Doctor of Physic; 23. a Wife of Bath; 24. a Parson; 25. a Ploughman; 26. a Reeve; 27. a Miller; 28. a Sompnour; 29. a Pardoner; 30. a Manciple; 31. Chaucer himself. It must be observed, however, that in this list there is one very suspicious article, which is that of the three Priests. As it appears evidently to have been the design of Chaucer to compose his company of individuals of different ranks, in order to produce a greater variety of distinct characters, we can hardly conceive that he would, in this single instance, introduce three of the same profession without any discriminating circumstances whatever; and in fact, when the Nun's Priest is called upon to tell his tale, [ver. 14,814] he is accosted by the Host in a manner which will not permit us to suppose that two others of the same denomination were present. This must be allowed to be a strong objection to the genuineness of that article of the three Priests; but it is not the only one. All the other characters are particularly described, and most of them very much at large, whereas the whole that is said of the other Nun and the three Priests is contained in these two lines [ver. 163.] at the end of the Prioress's character:—

‘Another nun also with her had she,
That was her chapelein, and priestes three.’

Where it is also observable, that the single circumstance of description is false; for no nun could be a chaplain. The chief duty of a chaplain was to say mass and to hear confession, neither of which offices could regularly be performed by a nun, or by any woman.*

* It appears that some abbesses did at one time attempt to hear the confessions of their nuns, and to exercise some other smaller parts of the clerical function; but this practice, I apprehend, was soon stopped by Gregory IX., who has forbidden it in the strongest terms. ‘Decretal,’ l. v. tit. 38, c. x. ‘*Nova quædam nostris sunt auribus intimata, quod Abbesses moniales proprias benedicunt; ipsarum quoque confessiones in criminibus audiunt, et legentes Evangelium præsumunt publice prædicare: Cum igitur id absonum sit et pariter absurdum, Mandamus quatenus ne id de cætero fiat cunctis firmiter inhibere.*’ If these presumptuous abbesses had ventured to say mass, his Holiness would doubtless have thundered still louder against them.

It should seem, therefore, that we have sufficient ground to reject these two lines, or at least the second, as an interpolation; * by which means we shall get rid of two of the priests, and the detail of the characters will agree with the gross number in ver. 24, Chaucer himself being included among the nine and twenty. As novelists generally delight in even numbers, it is not improbable that the Host was intended to be the thirtieth. Though not under the same obligation with the other pilgrims, he might nevertheless tell his tale among them as a volunteer.

§ VII. This leads me, in the third place, to examine what the agreement was which the pilgrims entered into, at the suggestion of the Host, with respect to the number of tales that each person was to tell. The proposal of the Host stands thus, with very little variation, in all the MSS.

This is the point—says he, ver. 792—

‘That each of you, to shorten with your way,
In this viage shall tellen talës tway,
To Canterbury ward, I mean it so,
And homeward he shall tellen other two.’

From this passage we should certainly conclude, that each of them was to tell two tales in the journey to Canterbury, and two more in the journey homeward; but all the other passages, in which mention is made of this agreement, would rather lead us

* My notion, I cannot call it opinion, of the matter is this, that the first of these lines did really begin the character of the Nun, which Chaucer had originally inserted in this place, together with that of the Nun's Priest, at as great length as the other characters, but that they were both afterwards expunged, either by himself, or, more probably, by those who published his work after his death, for reasons of nearly the same kind with those which occasioned the suppression of the latter part of the ‘Cook's Tale.’ I suspect our bard had been rather too gay in his description of these two religious persons. See a little concerning the Priest, vers. 15,453–15,465.

If it should be thought improbable that an interpolator would insert anything so absurd and contradictory to the author's plan as the second line, I beg leave to suggest that it is still more improbable that such a line should have come from the author himself; and further, I think I can promise, in the course of the following work, to point out several other undoubted interpolations, which are to the full as absurd as the subject of our present discussion.

to believe, that they were to tell only one tale in each journey ; and the Prologue to the ‘ Parson’s Tale ’ strongly confirms this latter supposition. The Host says there, [ver. 17,327,]—

‘ Now lacketh us no tales mo than one,’—

and calling upon the Parson to tell this one tale, which was wanting, he says to him, [ver. 17,335,]—

‘ — Ne break thou not our play,
For every man, save thou, hath told his tale.’

The Parson therefore had not told any tale before, and only one tale was expected from him (and consequently from each of the others) upon that journey.

It is true, that a very slight alteration of the passage first cited would reconcile that, too, to this hypothesis. If it were written—

‘ That each of you, to shorten with your way,
In this viage shall tellen tales tway :
To Canterbury ward, I mean it, o,
And homeward he shall tell another to’—

the original proposition of the Host would perfectly agree with what appears to have been the subsequent practice. However, I cannot venture to propose such an alteration of the text, in opposition to so many MSS., some of them of the best note ; and therefore the reader, if he is so pleased, may consider this as one of those inconsistencies, hinted at above, which prove too plainly that the author had not finished his work.

§ VIII. The remainder of the Prologue is employed in describing the characters of the pilgrims, and their first setting out upon their journey. The little that it may be necessary to say in illustration of some of the characters I shall reserve for the notes. The circumstances of their setting out are related succinctly and naturally ; and the contrivance of appointing the Knight, by lot, to tell the first tale, is a happy one, as it affords the author the opportunity of giving his work a splendid opening, and at the same time does not infringe that apparent equality, upon which the freedom of discourse, and consequently the ease and good humour of every society, so entirely depends. The general satisfaction which this appointment is said to give to the company, puts us in mind of a similar gratification to the

secret wishes of the Grecian army, when the lot of fighting with Hector falls to Ajax; though there is not the least probability that Chaucer had ever read the 'Iliad,' even in a translation.

§ IX. The 'Knight's Tale,' or at least a poem upon the same subject, was originally composed by Chaucer as a separate work. As such it is mentioned by him, among some of his other works, in the 'Legend of Good Women,' [ver. 420,] under the title of — 'All the Love of Palamon and Arcite of Thebes,' though the story is known little, and the last words seem to imply that it had not made itself very popular. It is not impossible that at first it was a mere translation of the 'Theseida' of Boccaccio, and that its present form was given it when Chaucer determined to assign it the first place among his 'Canterbury Tales.' As the 'Theseida,' upon which this tale is entirely founded, is very rarely to be met with,* it may be not unpleasing to the reader

* The letter which Boccaccio sent to the Fiammetta with this poem is dated 'di Napoli a 15 d'Aprile, 1341.' 'Lettere di xiii. Uomini Illust.' Ven. 1564. I believe that date is a true one, and it is remarkable as being the very year and month in which Petrarch received the laurel at Rome. See 'Petr. Ep. Famil.' xii. 12.

The first edition of the 'Theseida,' according to Quadrio [t. vi. p. 462,] was without date, and under the mistaken title of 'Amazonide,' which might have been proper enough for the first book. It was soon after, however, reprinted with its true title at Ferrara in 1475, fol. Dr Askew was so obliging as to lend me the only copy of this edition which I have ever heard of in England. The Rev. Mr Crofts has a later edition in 4to, printed at Venice in 1528, but in that the poem has been 'riveduto e emendato,' that is, in plain English, modernised. I cannot help suspecting that Salvini, who has inveighed with great bitterness against the corruptions of the printed 'Theseida,' [Manni, 'Ist. del Decam.' p. 52,] had only examined this last edition, for I observe that a stanza which he has quoted (from some MS., as I suppose,) is not near so correct as it is in the edition of 1475. As this stanza contains Boccaccio's own account of the intention of his poem, I shall transcribe it here from that edition. It is the beginning of his conclusion :—

* Poi che le Muse nude cominciaro
Nel conspetto de gli omeni ad andare,
Gia fur de quelli che [gia] le exercitaro
Con bello stilo in honesto parlare,
E altri in amoroso lo operaro;
Ma tu, o libro, primo al lor cantare
Di Marte fai gli affanni sostenuti,
Nei vulgar Latino mai piu non veduti.'

This plainly alludes to a passage in Dante, 'De Vulgari Eloquentia,' l. ii.

to see here a short summary of it, which will shew with what skill Chaucer has proceeded in reducing a poem of about ten thousand lines to a little more than two thousand, without omitting any material circumstance.

The 'Theseida' is distributed into twelve books or cantos.

B. I. contains the war of Theseus with the Amazons; their submission to him; and his marriage with Hippolyta.

B. II. Theseus, having spent two years in Scythia, is reproached by Perithous in a vision, and immediately returns to Athens with Hippolyta and her sister Emilia. He enters the city in triumph; finds the Grecian ladies in the temple of Clemenzia; marches to Thebes; kills Creon, &c., and brings home Palemone and Arcita, who are

'*Damnati—ad eterna presone.*'

B. III. Emilia, walking in a garden and singing, is heard and seen first by Arcita,* who calls Palemone. They are both equally enamoured of her, but without any jealousy or rivalship. Emilia is supposed to see them at the window, and to be not displeased with their admiration. Arcita is released at the request of Perithous; takes his leave of Palemone, with embraces, &c.

c. ii., where, after having pointed out the three great subjects of poetry, viz., 'arma, amorem, et rectitudinem,' (war, love, and morality,) and enumerated the illustrious writers upon each, he adds: 'Arma vero nullum Italum adhuc invenio poetasse.' Boccaccio therefore apparently prides himself upon having supplied the defect remarked by Dante, and upon being the first who taught the Italian muses to sing of arms.

Besides other variations for the worse, the fifth line in Salvini's copy is written thus—

'*Ed altri in doldi modi l'operaro*'—

by which means the allusion to Dante is rendered incomplete.

* In describing the commencement of this amour, which is to be the subject of the remainder of the poem, Chaucer has entirely departed from his author in three principal circumstances, and, I think, in each with very good reason. 1. By supposing Emilia to be seen first by Palamon, he gives him an advantage over his rival, which makes the catastrophe more consonant with poetical justice. 2. The picture which Boccaccio has exhibited of two young princes, violently enamoured of the same object, without jealousy or rivalship, if not absolutely unnatural, is certainly very insipid and unpoetical. 3. As no consequence is to follow from their being seen by Emilia at this time, it is better, I think, to suppose, as Chaucer has done, that they are not seen by her.

B. IV. Arcita, having changed his name to Pentheo, goes into the service of Menelaus at Mycenæ, and afterwards of Peleus at Ægina. From thence he returns to Athens and becomes a favourite servant of Theseus, being known to Emilia, though to nobody else; till after some time he is overheard making his complaint in a wood, to which he usually resorted for that purpose, by Pamphilo, a servant of Palemone.

B. V. Upon the report of Pamphilo, Palemone begins to be jealous of Arcita, and is desirous to get out of prison in order to fight with him. This he accomplishes with the assistance of Pamphilo, by changing clothes with Alimeto, a physician. He goes armed to the wood in quest of Arcita, whom he finds sleeping. At first they are very civil and friendly to each other.* Then Palemone calls upon Arcita to renounce his pretensions to Emilia, or to fight with him. After many long expostulations on the part of Arcita, they fight, and are discovered first by Emilia, who sends for Theseus. When he finds who they are, and the cause of their difference, he forgives them, and proposes the method of deciding their claim to Emilia by a combat of an hundred on each side, to which they gladly agree.

B. VI. Palemone and Arcita live splendidly at Athens, and send out messengers to summon their friends, who arrive; and the principal of them are severally described, viz., Lycurgus, Peleus, Phocus, Telamon, &c., Agamemnon, Menelaus, Castor, and Pollux, &c. Nestor, Evander, Perithous, Ulysses, Diomedes, Pygmalion, Minos, &c., with a great display of ancient history and mythology.

B. VII. Theseus declares the laws of the combat, and the two parties of an hundred on each side are formed. The day before the combat, Arcita, after having visited the temples of all the gods, makes a formal prayer to Mars. The prayer, being personified,† is said to go and find Mars in his temple in Thrace,

* ‘En sieme se fer festa di bon core,
E li loro accidenti si narraro.’ *Thes.*, I. v.

This is surely too much in the style of romance. Chaucer has made them converse more naturally. He has also judiciously avoided to copy Boccaccio in representing Arcite as more moderate than his rival.

† ‘Era alor forsi Marte in exercitio
Di chiara far la parte ruginosa’

which is described ; and Mars, upon understanding the message, causes favourable signs to be given to Arcita. In the same manner Palemone closes his religious observances with a prayer to Venus. His prayer, being also personified, sets out for the temple of Venus on Mount Citherone, which is also described ; and the petition is granted. Then the sacrifice of Emilia to Diana is described ; her prayer ; the appearance of the goddess ; and the signs of the two fires. In the morning they proceed to the theatre with their respective troops, and prepare for the action. Arcita puts up a private prayer to Emilia, and harangues his troop publicly ; and Palemone does the same.

B. VIII. Contains a description of the battle, in which Palemone is taken prisoner.

*Del grande suo e horribile hospitio,
Quando de Arcita la orationi pietosa
Pervenne li per fare il dato offizio,
Tutta ne lo aspecto lagrimosa :
La qual divene di spavento muta,
Come di Marte hebbe laca veduta.*

Thes., l. vii.

As this contrivance, of personifying the prayers and sending them to the several deities, is only in order to introduce a description of the respective temples, it will be allowed, I believe, that Chaucer has attained the same end by a more natural fiction. It is very probable that Boccaccio caught the idea of making the prayers persons from Homer, with whose works he was better acquainted than most of his contemporaries in this part of the world ; and there can be no doubt, I suppose, that Chaucer's imagination, in the expedient which he has substituted, was assisted by the occasional edifices which he had himself seen erected for the decoration of tournaments.

The combat which follows, having no foundation in ancient history or manners, it is no wonder that both poets should have admitted a number of incongruous circumstances into their description of it. The great advantage which Chaucer has over his original in this respect is, that he is much shorter. When we have read in the 'Theseida' a long and learned catalogue of all the heroes of antiquity brought together upon this occasion, we are only the more surprised to see Theseus, in such an assembly, conferring the honour of knighthood upon the two Theban chieftains :—

*'E senza stare con non piccolo honore
Cinse le spade a li due scudieri,
E ad Arcita Poluce e Castore
Calciaro d'oro li sproni e volontieri,
E Diomede e Ulike di cuore
Calzati a Palemone, e cavallieri
Ambedui furono alora novelli
Li inamorati Theban damigelli.'*

Thes., l. vii.

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B. IX. The horse of Arcita, being frightened by a Fury, sent from hell at the desire of Venus, throws him. However, he is carried to Athens in a triumphal chariot with Emilia by his side; is put to bed dangerously ill, and there by his own desire espouses Emilia.

B. X. The funeral of the persons killed in the combat. Arcita, being given over by his physicians, makes his will, in discourse with Theseus, and desires that Palemone may inherit all his possessions, and also Emilia. He then takes leave of Palemone and Emilia, to whom he repeats the same request. Their lamentations. Arcita orders a sacrifice to Mercury, which Palemone performs for him, and dies.

B. XI. Opens with the passage of Arcita's soul to heaven, imitated from the beginning of the Ninth Book of Lucan. The funeral of Arcita. Description of the wood felled takes up six stanzas. Palemone builds a temple in honour of him, in which his whole history is painted. The description of this painting is an abridgment of the preceding part of the poem.

B. XII. Theseus proposes to carry into execution Arcita's will by the marriage of Palemone and Emilia. This they both decline for some time in formal speeches, but at last are persuaded and married. The kings, &c., take their leave, and Palemone remains—‘in gioia e in diporto con la sua dona nobile e cortese.’

From this sketch of the ‘Theseida,’ it is evident enough that Chaucer was obliged to Boccaccio* for the plan and principal

* To whom Boccaccio was obliged is a more difficult subject of inquiry. That the story was of his own invention I think is scarcely credible. He speaks of it himself as ‘very ancient.’ [Lett. alla Fiammetta, ‘Biblioth. Smith.’ App. p. cxli.] ‘Trovata una antichissima Storia, e al più delle genti non manifesta, in Latino volgare, acciocchè più dilettasse e massimamente a voi, che già con sommo titolo le mie rime esaltaste, ho ridotta.’ He then tells her that she will observe that what is related under the name of one of the two lovers and of Emilia, is very similar to what had actually passed between herself and him; and adds, ‘Se forse alcune cose soperchie vi fossono, il voler bene coprire ciò che non era onesto manifestare, da noi due in fuori, s’l volere la storia seguire, ne sono cagione.’ I am well aware, however, that declarations of this kind, prefixed to fabulous works, are not much to be depended upon. The wildest of the French romances are

incidents of the ‘Knight’s Tale;’ and in the notes upon that tale I shall point out some passages, out of many more, which are literal translations from the Italian.

§ X. When the Knight has finished his tale, the Host with great propriety calls upon the Monk, as the next in rank among the men, to tell the next tale; but, as it seems to have been the intention of Chaucer to avail himself of the variety of his characters, in order to distribute alternate successions of serious and comic, in nearly equal proportions, throughout his work, he has contrived that the Host’s arrangement shall be set aside by the intrusion of the drunken Miller, whose tale is such, as might be expected from his character and condition, a complete contrast to the Knight’s.

§ XI. I have not been able to discover from whence the story of the ‘Miller’s Tale’ is taken; so that for the present I must give Chaucer credit for it as his own invention, though in general he appears to have built his tales, both serious and comic, upon stories which he found ready made. The great difference is, that in his serious pieces he often follows his author with the servility of a mere translator, and in consequence his narration is jejune and constrained; whereas in the comic, he is generally satisfied with borrowing a slight hint of his subject, which he varies, enlarges, and embellishes at pleasure, and gives the whole the air and colour of an original; a sure sign that his genius rather led him to compositions of the latter kind.

§ XII. The next tale is told by the Reeve (who is represented above, ver. 589, as ‘a choleric man’) in revenge of the Miller’s tale. It has been generally said to be borrowed from the ‘Decameron,’ D. ix. N. 6; but I rather think that both Boccaccio and

commonly said by the authors to be translated from some old Latin chronicle at St Denis. And certainly the story of ‘Palemone and Arcita,’ as related by Boccaccio, could not be very ancient. If it was of Greek original, as I rather suspect, it must have been thrown into its present form after the Norman princes had introduced the manners of chivalry into their dominions in Sicily and Italy.

The poem in modern Greek political verses, ‘*De Nuptiis Thesei et Emilie*,’ printed at Venice in 1529, is a mere translation of the ‘Theseida.’ The author has even translated the prefatory epistle addressed by Boccaccio to the Fiammetta.

Chaucer, in this instance, have taken whatever they have in common from an old Fabliau, or Conte, of an anonymous French rhymer—‘De Gombert et des Deux Clers.’ The reader may easily satisfy himself upon this head, by casting his eye upon the French Fabliau, which has lately been printed with several others from MSS. in France. See ‘Fabliaux et Contes,’ Paris, 1756, t. ii. pp. 115–124.

§ XIII. The ‘Cook’s Tale’ is imperfect in all the MSS. which I have had an opportunity of examining. In MS. A. it seems to have been entirely omitted; and indeed I cannot help suspecting that it was intended to be omitted, at least in this place, as in the Manciple’s Prologue, when the Cook is called upon to tell a tale, there is no intimation of his having told one before. Perhaps our author might think that three tales of ‘harlotry,’ as he calls it, together would be too much. However, as it is sufficiently certain that the Cook’s Prologue and the beginning of his Tale are genuine compositions, they have their usual place in this edition. There was not the same reason for inserting the story of Gamelyn, which in some MSS. is annexed to the ‘Cook’s Tale.’ It is not to be found in any of the MSS. of the first authority; and the manner, style, and versification, all prove it to have been the work of an author much inferior to Chaucer. I did not therefore think myself warranted to publish it a second time among ‘The Canterbury Tales,’ though as a relic of our ancient poetry, and the foundation, perhaps, of Shakspeare’s ‘As You Like It,’ I could have wished to see it more accurately printed, than it is in the only edition which we have of it.

§ XIV. In the Prologue to the ‘Man of Law’s Tale’ Chaucer recalls our attention to the action, if I may so call it, of his drama, the journey of the pilgrims. They had set out soon after ‘the day began to spring,’ ver. 824 and f. When the Reeve was beginning to tell his tale, they were in the neighbourhood of Deptford and Greenwich, and it was ‘half way prime;’ that is, I suppose, ‘half way past prime,’ about half-hour after seven A.M. [vers. 3904, 3905]. How much further they were advanced upon their road at this time is not said; but the hour of the day is pointed out to us by two circumstances. We are first told [vers. 4422, 4423,] that

‘—— the sun
The arc of his artificial day had run
The fourth part and half an hour and more ;’

and secondly, [vers. 4432,] that he was ‘ five and forty degrees high ; ’ and this last circumstance is so confirmed by the mention of a corresponding phenomenon that it is impossible to suspect any error in the number. The equality in length of shadows to their projecting bodies can only happen when the sun is at the height of five and forty degrees. Unfortunately, however, this description, though seemingly intended to be so accurate, will neither enable us to conclude with the MSS. that it was ‘ ten of the clock,’ nor to fix upon any other hour; as the two circumstances just mentioned are not found to coincide in any part of the 28th, or of any other, day of April * in this climate. All that we can conclude with certainty is, that it was not past ten of the clock.

The compliments which Chaucer has introduced upon his own writings are modest enough, and quite unexceptionable; but if the reflection [ver. 4497, and f.] upon those who relate such stories as that of ‘ Canace,’ or of ‘ Apollonius Tyrius,’ was levelled at Gower, as I very much suspect, it will be difficult to reconcile such an attack to our notions of the strict friendship which is generally supposed to have subsisted between the two bards.†

* The 28th day of April, in the time of Chaucer, answering to our 6th or 7th of May, the sun, in the latitude of London, rose about half an hour after four, and the length of the artificial day was a little more than fifteen hours. A fourth part of fifteen hours, (= 3^h 45^m.) and half an hour and more, may be fairly computed to make together four hours and a half, which being reckoned from half-past four A.M., give the time of the day exactly nine A.M. But the sun was not at the altitude of 45° till above half an hour after nine. In like manner, if we take the 18th day, (according to all the editions and some MSS.) we shall find that the sun indeed was 45° high at ten A.M. exactly, but that the fourth part of the day, and half an hour and more, had been completed at nine A.M.

In this uncertainty I have left the text as I found it in all the best MSS. Only MS. HA. does not express the hour, but reads thus—

‘It was atte cloke.’

† There is another circumstance which rather inclines me to believe that their friendship suffered some interruption in the latter part of their lives. In the new edition of the ‘ Confessio Amantis,’ which Gower pub-

The attack, too, at this time must appear the more extraordinary on the part of our bard, as he is just going to put into the mouth of his Man of Law a tale, of which almost every circumstance is borrowed from Gower. The fact is, that the story of 'Canace' is related by Gower in his 'Conf. Amant.', b. iii., and the story of 'Apollonius'* (or 'Apollynus,' as he is there called) in the eighth book of the same work; so that, if Chaucer really did not mean to reflect upon his old friend, his choice of these two instances was rather unlucky.

§ XV. The 'Man of Law's Tale,' as I have just said, is taken, with very little variation, from Gower, 'Conf. Amant.' b. ii. If there could be any doubt, upon a cursory perusal of the two

lished after the accession of Henry IV, the verses in praise of Chaucer (fol. 190, b. col. 1, ed. 1532,) are omitted. See MS. Harl. 3869. Though, perhaps the death of Chaucer at that time had rendered the compliment contained in those verses less proper than it was at first, that alone does not seem to have been a sufficient reason for omitting them, especially as the original date of the work, in the 16th of Richard II., is preserved. Indeed, the only other alterations which I have been able to discover are toward the beginning and end, where everything which had been said in praise of Richard in the first edition is either left out or converted to the use of his successor.

* The 'History of Apollonius, King of Tyre,' was supposed by Mark Welser, when he printed it in 1595, to have been translated from the Greek a thousand years before. [Fabr. Bib. Gr. v. 6, p. 821.] It certainly bears strong marks of a Greek original, though it is not, that I know, now extant in that language. The rhythmical poem under the same title in modern Greek was re-translated (if I may so speak) from the Latin —*απὸ Λατινίκου εἰς Ρωμαῖκην γλώσσαν*. Du Cange, 'Index. Author. ad Gloss. Graec.' When Welser printed it, he probably did not know that it had been published already, perhaps more than once, among the 'Gesta Romanorum.' In an edition which I have, printed at Rouen in 1521, it makes the 154th chapter. Toward the latter end of the twelfth century, Godfrey of Viterbo, in his 'Pantheon,' or universal chronicle, inserted this romance as part of the history of the third Antiochus, about two hundred years before Christ. It begins thus [MS. Reg. 14 C. xi.]:—

'Filia Seleuci regis stat clara decole
Matreque defuncta pater arsit in ejus amore.
Res habet effectum, pressa puella dolet.'

The rest is in the same metre, with one pentameter only to two hexameters.

Gower, by his own acknowledgment, took his story from the 'Pantheon'; as the author, whoever he was, of 'Pericles, Prince of Tyre,' professes to have followed Gower.

tales, which of them was written first, the following passage, I think, is sufficient to decide the question. At ver. 5506, Chaucer says—

‘Some men would say, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message until this emperor ;’

and we read in Gower, that Maurice is actually sent upon this message to the emperor. We may, therefore, fairly conclude that in this passage Chaucer alludes to Gower, who had treated the same subject before him, but, as he insinuates, with less propriety.

I do not, however, suppose that Gower was the inventor of this tale. It had probably passed through several hands before it came to him. I find among the Cotton MSS. Cal. A. ii. fol. 69, an old English rhyme, entitled ‘Emare,’ in which the heroine under that name goes through a series of adventures for the most part* exactly similar to those of Constance. But neither was the author of this rhyme the inventor of the story, for in fol. 70, a. he refers to his original ‘in Romans,’ or French; and in the last stanza he tells us expressly—

‘This is one of Britain lays
That was used by old days.’

Of the ‘Britain lays’ I shall have occasion to speak more at large, when I come to the ‘Franklin’s Tale.’

§ XVI. The ‘Man of Law’s Tale’ in the best MSS. is followed by the ‘Wife of Bath’s Prologue and Tale,’ and therefore I have placed them so here; not, however, merely in compliance with authority, but because, according to the common arrangement, in the ‘Merchant’s Tale’† there is a direct reference to the ‘Wife

* The chief differences are, that Emare is originally exposed in a boat for refusing to comply with the incestuous desires of the emperor her father; that she is driven on the coast of Galys, or Wales, and married to the king of that country. The contrivances of the stepmother, and the consequences of them, are the same in both stories.

† V. 9559. Justine says to his brother January—

‘The Wife of Bath, if ye have understand,
Of marriage, which ye now have in hand,
Declared hath ful well in little space.’—

alluding very plainly to this ‘Prologue’ of ‘the Wife of Bath.’ The impropriety of such an allusion in the mouth of Justine is gross enough.

of Bath's Prologue, before it has been spoken. Such an impropriety I was glad to remove upon the authority of the best MSS., though it had been acquiesced in by all former editors; especially as the same MSS. pointed out to me another—I believe the true—place for both the Merchant's and the Squire's tales, which have hitherto been printed immediately after the Man of Law's. But of that hereafter.

§ XVII. The want of a few lines to introduce the 'Wife of Bath's Prologue' is, perhaps, one of those defects, hinted at above, which Chaucer would have supplied if he had lived to finish his work. The extraordinary length of it, as well as the vein of pleasantry that runs through it, is very suitable to the character of the speaker. The greatest part must have been of Chaucer's own invention, though one may plainly see that he had been reading the popular invectives against marriage and women in general; such as the 'Roman de la Rose'; 'Valerius ad Rufinum, De non Ducendâ Uxore,' and particularly 'Hieronymus Contra Jovinianum.'*

The truth is, that Chaucer has inadvertently given to a character in the 'Merchant's Tale' an argument which the Merchant himself might naturally have used upon a similar occasion, after he had heard the Wife of Bath. If we suppose, with the editions, that the Wife of Bath had not at that time spoken her 'Prologue,' the impropriety will be increased to an incredible degree.

* The holy father, by way of recommending celibacy, has exerted all his learning and eloquence (and he certainly was not deficient in either) to collect together and aggravate whatever he could find to the prejudice of the female sex. Among other things, he has inserted his own translation (probably) of a long extract from what he calls 'Liber Aureolus Theophrasti de Nuptiis.'

Next to him in order of time was the treatise entitled 'Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non Ducendâ Uxore.' MS. Reg. 12 D. iii. It has been printed for the similarity of its sentiments, I suppose, among the works of St Jerome, though it is evidently of a much later date. Tanner (from Wood's MS. Coll.) attributes it to Walter Map, 'Bib. Brit.' v. Map. I should not believe it to be older; as John of Salisbury, who has treated of the same subject in his 'Polycrat.' l. viii. c. xi., does not appear to have seen it.

To these two books Jean de Meun has been obliged for some of the severest strokes in his 'Roman de la Rose,' and Chaucer has transfused the quintessence of all the three works upon the subject of matrimony into his 'Wife of Bath's Prologue' and 'Merchant's Tale.'

§ XVIII. The 'Wife of Bath's Tale' seems to have been taken from the story of 'Florent,' in Gower, 'Conf. Amant,' b. i., or perhaps from an older narrative, in the 'Gesta Romanorum,' or some such collection, from which the story of Florent was itself borrowed. However that may have been, it must be allowed that Chaucer has considerably improved the fable, by lopping off some improbable, as well as unnecessary circumstances; and the transferring of the scene from Sicily to the court of King Arthur must have had a very pleasing effect, before the fabulous majesty of that court was quite obliterated.

The old ballad entitled 'The Marriage of Sir Gawaine,' [*Ancient Poetry*, vol. iii. p. 11,] which the learned editor thinks may have furnished Chaucer with this tale, I should rather conjecture, with deference to so good a judge in these matters, to have been composed by one who had read both Gower and Chaucer.

§ XIX. The tales of the Friar and the Sompnour are well ingrafted upon that of the Wife of Bath. The ill-humour which shews itself between those two characters is quite natural, as no two professions at that time were at more constant variance. The regular clergy, and particularly the mendicant friars, affected a total exemption from all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, except that of the pope, which made them exceedingly obnoxious to the bishops, and of course to all the inferior officers of the national hierarchy.

I have not been able to trace either of these tales to any author older than Chaucer, and possibly they may both have been built upon some traditional pleasantries, which were never before committed to writing.

§ XX. The 'Clerk's Tale' is in a different strain from the three preceding. He tells us, in his Prologue, that he learned it 'from Petrarch at Padua; ' and this, by the way, is all the ground that I can find for the notion that Chaucer had seen Petrarch *

* I can find no older or better authority for this notion than the following passage in Speght's life of Chaucer, prefixed to the edition in 1597:—'Some write that he, with Petrarke, was present at the marriage of Lionell, Duke of Clarence, with Violante, daughter of Galeasius, Duke of Millaine; yet Paullus Jovius nameth not Chaucer; but Petrarke, he sayth,

in Italy. It is not easy to say why Chaucer should choose to own an obligation for this tale to Petrarch rather than to Boccaccio from whose 'Decameron,' D. x. n. 10, it was translated by Petrarch in 1373, the year before his death, as appears by a remarkable letter, which he sent with his translation to Boccaccio. 'Opp. Petrarch.' pp. 540-7, Ed. Bas. 1581. It should seem, too, from the same letter, that the story was not invented by Boccaccio,

was there.' It appears, from an instrument in Rymer, ['Liberat.' 42 E. III. m. 1.] that the Duke of Clarence passed from Dover to Calais, on his way to Milan, in the spring of 1368, with a retinue of 457 men and 1280 horses. That Chaucer might have attended the duke upon this occasion is not impossible. He had been, probably, for some time in the king's service, and had received the year before a grant of an annuity of twenty marks—'pro bono servitio, quod dilectus Valettus noster, Galfridus Chaucer nobis impendit et impendet in futurum.' 'Pat.' 41 E. III., p. 1, m. 13, ap. Rymer. There is a curious account of the feast at this marriage in the 'Chronica di Mantoua' of Aliprandi, [Murator. 'Antiq. Med. Ævi,' vol. v. p. 1187, *et seq.*] but he does not give the names of the

'Grandi Signori e Baroni Inghilrese.'

who were, as he says,

'Con Messere Lionell' in compagnia.'

The most considerable of them were probably those twenty-six (knights and others) who, before their setting out for Milan, procured the king's licence to appoint attorneys-general to act for them here. 'Franc.' 42 E. III. m. 8, ap. Rymer. The name of Chaucer does not appear among them.

The embassy to Genoa, to which Chaucer was appointed in November 1372, might possibly have afforded him another opportunity of seeing Petrarch. But, in the first place, it is uncertain whether he ever went upon that embassy. If he did, the distance from Genoa to Padua, where Petrarch resided, is considerable; and I cannot help thinking that a reverential visit from a minister of the king of England would have been so flattering to the old man, that either he himself, or some of his biographers, must have recorded it. On the other hand, supposing Chaucer at Genoa, it is to be presumed that he would not have been deterred by the difficulties of a much longer journey from paying his respects to the first literary character of the age; and it is remarkable that the time of this embassy, in 1373, is the precise time at which he could have learned the story of Griseldis 'from Petrarch at Padua.' For Petrarch in all probability made his translation in that very year, and he died in July of the year following.

The inquisitive and judicious author of 'Mémoires pour la Vie de Pétrarque,' gave us hopes [Pref. to t. ii. p. 6,] that he would shew that Chaucer

for Petrarch says, ‘that it had always pleased him when he heard it many years before,’* whereas he had not seen the ‘Decameron’ till very lately.

§ XXI. In the ballad, with which the Clerk concludes his tale, I have changed the order of the three last stanzas, so as to make it end—

‘And let him care, and weep, and wring, and wail;’
and immediately after I have placed the ‘Merchant’s Prologue,’ beginning—

‘Weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow,
I have enough.’

This arrangement, which recommends itself at first sight, is also supported by so many MSS. of the best authority, that, without great negligence or dulness, I could not have either overlooked or rejected it, especially as the whole turn of the ‘Merchant’s Prologue,’ and the express mention of ‘Grisilde’ in ver. 9100, demonstrate that he is supposed to speak with the ‘Clerk’s Tale’ fresh in his memory.

§ XXII. The scene of the ‘Merchant’s Tale’ is laid in Italy, but none of the names, except Damian and Justin, seem to be

was in connexion (*en liaison*) with Petrarch. As he has not fulfilled his promise in a later (I fear, the last) volume of his very ingenious work, I suspect that his more accurate researches have not enabled him to verify an opinion, which he probably at first adopted upon the credit of some biographer of Chaucer.

* ‘Cum et mihi semper ante multos annos audita placuisset, et tibi usque adeo placuisse perpenderem, ut vulgari eam stylo tuo censueris non indignam, et fine operis, ubi rhetorum disciplina validiora quælibet collocari jubet.’ Petrarch, *loc. cit.*, M. L’Abbé de Sade [‘Mém. de Petr.’ t. iii. p. 797.] says, that the story of Griseldis is taken from an ancient MS. in the library of M. Foucault, entitled, ‘Le Parement des Dames.’ If this should have been said upon the authority of Manni [‘Ist. del Decam.’ p. 603.] as I very much suspect, and if Manni himself meant to refer to M. Galland’s ‘Discours sur quelques Anciens Poëtes,’ [‘Mém. de l’Acad. des I. et B. L.’ t. ii. p. 686.] we must look still further for the original of Boccaccio’s novel. M. Galland says nothing, as I observe, of the antiquity of the MS. ‘Le titre,’ he says, ‘est “Le Parement des Dames,” avec des explications en prose, où l’on trouve “L’Histoire de Griselidis,” que feu M. Perrault a mise en vers;’ but he says also expressly, that it was a work of Olivier de la Marche, who was not born till many years after the death of Boccaccio.

Italian, but rather made at pleasure ; so that I doubt whether the story be really of Italian growth. The adventure of the pear-tree I find in a small collection of Latin fables, written by one Adolphus, in elegiac verses of his fashion, in the year 1315. As this fable has never been printed but once, and in a book not commonly to be met with, I shall transcribe below* the material parts of it, and I dare say the reader will not be very anxious to see any more.

Whatever was the real original of this tale, the machinery of the fairies, which Chaucer has used so happily, was probably added by himself ; and indeed, I cannot help thinking, that his Pluto and Proserpina were the true progenitors of Oberon and

* 'Adolphi Fabulae,' ap. Leyser. 'Hist. Poet. Medii Aevi.' p. 2008.

Fabula I.

'Cecus erat quidam, cui pulcra virago—

In curtis viridi resident hi cespite quādām
Luce. Petit mulier robur adire Pyri.
Vir faveit, amplectens mox robur ubique lacertia.
Arbor aduncis fuit, qua latuit juvenis.
Amplexuēt eam dans basia dulcia. Terram
Incepit colere vomere cum proprio.

Audit vir strepitum : nam aēpe carentia sensus
Unius in reliquo, nosco, vigore solet.
Heu miser ! exclamat ; te ledit adulter ibidem,
Conqueror hoc illi qui dedit esse mihi.
Tunc Deus omnipotens, qui condidit omnia verbo,
Qui sua membra probat, vascula velut figulus,
Restituens aciem misero, tonat illico ; Fallax
Femina, cur tantā fraude nocere cupis ?

Percipit illa virum. Vultu respondet alaceri :
Magna dedi medicis ; non tibi cura fuit.
Ast, ubi lustra sua satis uda petebat Apollo,
Candida splendescens Cynthia luce mera,
Tunc sopor irreperit mea languida corpora : quedam
Astitit : insonuit auribus illa meia.
Ludere cum juvencō studebas in roboris alto ;
Prīca viro dabitur lux cito, crede mihi.
Quod feci. Dominus ideo tibi munera lucis
Contulit : idcirco munera redde mihi.
Addidit ille fidem mulieri, de prece cujus
Se sanum credit, mittit et omne nefas.'

The same story is inserted among 'The Fables of Alphonse,' printed by Caxton in English, with those of Aesop, Avian, and Pogge, without date ; but I do not find it in the original Latin of Alphonsus, MS. Reg. 10 B. xii., or in any of the French translations of his work that I have examined.

Titania,* or rather, that they themselves have, once at least, deigned to revisit our poetical system under the latter names.

§ XXIII. The 'Prologue to the Squire's Tale' appears now for the first time in print. Why it has been omitted by all former editors I cannot guess, except, perhaps, because it did not suit with the place, which, for reasons best known to themselves, they were determined to assign to the 'Squire's Tale,' that is, after the *Man of Law's* and before the *Merchant's*. I have chosen rather to follow the MSS. of the best authority in placing the Squire's tale after the Merchant's, and in connecting them together by this Prologue, agreeably, as I am persuaded, to Chaucer's intention. The lines which have usually been printed by way of prologue to the 'Squire's Tale,' as I believe them to have been really composed by Chaucer, though not intended for the Squire's prologue, I have prefixed to the 'Shipman's Tale,' for reasons which I shall give when I come to speak of that tale.

§ XXIV. I should have been very happy if the MSS. which have furnished the 'Squire's Prologue,' had supplied the deficient part of his tale, but I fear the judgment of Milton was too true, that this story was 'left half-told' by the author. I have never been able to discover the probable original of this tale, and yet I should be very hardly brought to believe that the whole, or even any considerable part of it, was of Chaucer's invention.

§ XXV. We are now arrived with the common editions, though by a different course, at the 'Franklin's Tale'; and here again we must be obliged to the MSS., not indeed as in the last instance, for a new prologue, but for authorising us to prefix to this tale of the Franklin, a prologue, which, in the common editions, is prefixed to the tale of the Merchant, together with the true prologue of that tale, as printed above. It is scarce conceivable how these two prologues could ever be joined together and given to the same character, as they are not

* This observation is not meant to extend further than the king and queen of Faery; in whose characters, I think it is plain that Shakspeare, in imitation of Chaucer, has dignified our Gothic elves with the manners and language of the classical gods and goddesses. In the rest of his fairy system, Shakspeare seems to have followed the popular superstition of his own time.

only entirely unconnected, but also in one point directly contradictory to each other; for in that, which is properly the Merchant's, he says expressly, [ver. 9110,] that he had been married 'two months and not more,' whereas in the other, the speaker's chief discourse is about 'his son,' who is 'grown up.' This, therefore, upon the authority of the best MSS., I have restored to the Franklin; and I must observe, that the sentiments of it are much more suitable to his character than to that of the Merchant. It is quite natural that a wealthy landholder, of a generous disposition, as he is described, [vers. 333–362,] who has been sheriff, knight of the shire, &c., should be anxious to see his son, as we say, 'a gentleman,' and that he should talk slightlying of money in comparison with polished manners and virtuous endowments; but neither the character which Chaucer has drawn of his Merchant, nor our general notions of the profession at that time, prepare us to expect from him so liberal a strain of thinking.

§ XXVI. The 'Franklin's Tale,' as he tells us himself, is taken from a 'British lay,'* and the names of persons and

* 'Les premières chansons Françoises furent nommées des lais,' says M. de la Ravalier, 'Poes. du Roi. de Nav.' t. i. p. 215. And so far, I believe, he is right. But I see no foundation for supposing with him, in the same page, that the lay was 'une sorte d'élégie,' and that it was derived 'du mot Latin lessus, qui signifie des plaintes ;' or [in p. 217] that it was 'la chanson la plus majestueuse et la plus grave.' It seems more probable that 'lai,' in French, was anciently a generical term answering to song in English. The passage which M. de la Ravalier has quoted from 'Le Brut'—

‘Molt sot de lais, molt sot de notes’—
is thus rendered by our Layamon—[See before, 'Essay,' &c., note + p. lxvii.]—

‘Ne cuthe na mon swa muchel of song.’

The same word is used by Peirol d'Alvergna, MS. Crofts, fol. lxxv., to denote the songs of birds, certainly not of the plaintive kind:—

‘Et li ausell s'en van enamoran
L'uns per l'autre, et fan vantas (or cantas) et lais.’

For my own part, I am inclined to believe that 'liod,' Iceland, 'lied,' Teuton, 'leoth,' Saxon, and 'lai,' French, are all to be deduced from the same Gothic original.

But besides this general sense, the name of lay was particularly given to the French translations of certain poems originally composed in Armori-

places, as well as the scene and circumstances of the story, make this account extremely probable. The lay itself is either lost, or

can Bretagne, and in the Armorican language. I say the French translations, because lay not being (as I can find) an Armorican word, could hardly have been the name by which a species of poetry, not imported from France, was distinguished by the first composers in Bretagne.

The chief, perhaps the only, collection of these lays that is now extant, was translated into French octosyllable verse by a poetess who calls herself 'Marie,'—the same, without doubt, who made the translation of 'Esopo,' quoted by Pasquier, [*'Rech.'* l. viii. ch. i.], and Fauchet, [l. ii. n. 84.] and placed by them in the reign of St Louis, about the middle of the thirteenth century. Both her works have been preserved together in MS. Harl. 978, in a fair hand, which I see no reason to judge more recent than the latter end of that century.

The lays, with which only we are at present concerned, were addressed by her to some king. Fol. 139 :—

‘En le honur de vous, noble reis,
Ki tant estes pruz e curteis,
A ki tute joie se encleine,
E en ki quer tuz biens racine,
M'entremis des lais assembler,
Par rime faire e reconter.’

A few lines after, she names herself—

‘Oez, seignurs, ke dit Maria.’

The titles of the poems in this collection, to the number of twelve, are recited in the Harleian catalogue. They are in general the names of the principal persons in the several stories, and are most of them evidently Armorican; and I think no one can read the stories themselves without being persuaded that they were either really translated from the Armorican language, or at least composed by one who was well acquainted with that language and country.

Though these poems of Marie have of late been so little known as to have entirely escaped the researches of Fauchet and other French antiquaries, they were formerly in high estimation. Denis Piramus, a very tolerable versifier of the 'Legend of St Edmund the King' [MS. Cotton. Dom. A. xi.,] allows that Dame Marie, as he calls her, had great merit in the composition of her 'Lays,' though they are not all true :—

‘E si en est ele mult loee,
E la ryme par tut amee.’

A translation of her 'Lays,' as it should seem, into one of the northern languages, was among the books given by Gabriel de la Gardie to the University of Upsal, under the title of 'Variae Britannorum Fabulae.' See the description of the book by Stephanus, in 'Cat. Libb. Septent.', at the end of Hickes, 'Gr. A. S.', edit. 1689, 4to, p. 180. That Chaucer had read

buried, perhaps for ever, in one of those sepulchres of MSS. which, by courtesy, are called libraries; but there are two imitations of it extant by Boccaccio, the first in the fifth book of his 'Philocopo,' and the second in the 'Decameron,' D. x. n. 5. They agree in every respect with each other, except that the scene and the names are different, and in the latter the narration is less prolix and the style less flowery than in the former, which was a juvenile work.* The only material point, in which

them I think extremely probable, not only from a passage in his 'Dream,' [ver. 1820-1926,] which seems to have been copied from the 'Lay of Eliud,' but also from the manner in which he makes the Franklin speak of the Bretons and their compositions. [See the note on ver. 11,021.]

However, in Chaucer's time, there were other British lays extant beside this collection by Marie. Emarè has been mentioned before, § XV. An old English 'Ballad of Sir Gowther' [MS. Reg. 17, b. xlivi.] is said by the writer to have been taken 'out of one of the lays of Britanny'; in another place he says, 'the first lay of Britanny.' The original of the Franklin's tale was probably a third. There were also lays which did not pretend to be British, as 'Le Lay d'Aristote,' 'Li Lais de l'Oiselet' ['Fabliaux,' tom. i.] 'Le Lai du Corn,' by Robert Bikez, [MS. Bod. 1687,] is said by him to have been invented by Garaduc, who accomplished the adventure. In the ballad entitled 'The Boy and the Mantle,' ['Anc. Poet.,' v. iii. p. 1,] which I suspect to have been made up out of this lay and 'Le Court Mantel,' the successful knight is called Cradock. Robert Bikez says, further, that the horn was still to be seen at Cirencester:—

‘Qfust a Cirincetre
A une haute feste,
La pureit il veir
Icest corn tout pur veir,
Ceo dist Robert Bikez.’

In none of these lays do we find the qualities attributed to that sort of composition by M. de la Ravalier. According to these examples, we should rather define the lay to be a species of serious narrative poetry, of a moderate length, in a simple style, and light metre. Serious is here opposed, not to pleasant, but to ludicrous, in order to distinguish the lay from the conte or fabliau, as, on the other hand, its moderate length distinguishes it from the geste, or common Roman. All the lays that I have seen are in light metre, not exceeding eight syllables. [See before, 'Essay,' &c., note * p. lxxix.]

* I saw once an edition of the 'Philocopo,' printed at Venice, 1503, fol., with a letter at the end of it, in which the publisher, Hieronymo Squarzaficho, says (if I do not misremember), 'that this work was written by Boccaccio at twenty-five years of age (about 1338,) while he was at Naples, in the house of John Barrile.' Johannes Barrillus is called by

Boccaccio seems to have departed from his original, in this: instead of ‘the removal of the rocks,’ the lady desires ‘a garden full of the flowers and fruits of May, in the month of January;’ and some such alteration was certainly necessary when the scene came to be removed from Bretagne to Spain and Italy, as it is in Boccaccio’s novels.* I should guess that Chaucer has preserved pretty faithfully the principal incidents of the British tale, though he has probably thrown in some smaller circumstances to embellish his narration. The long list of virtuous women in Dorigene’s soliloquy is plainly copied from Hieronymus, ‘*Contra Jovinianum*.’

§ XXVII. Thus far I flatter myself I have been not unsuccessful in restoring the true order and connexion with each other of the Clerk’s, the Merchant’s, the Squire’s, and the Franklin’s tales; but with regard to the next step which I have taken, I must own myself more dubious. In all the editions, the tales of the Nun and the Canon’s Yeoman precede the Doctor’s,

Boccaccio [‘Geneal. Deor.’ l. xiv. c. 19.] ‘magni spiritus homo.’ He was sent by King Robert to attend Petrarch to his coronation at Rome, and is introduced by the latter in his Second Eclogue under the name of Idæus: ‘ab Idæ, monte Cretensi, unde et ipse oriundus fuit.’ (‘Intentiones Eclogarum Franc. Petrarchæ,’ MS. Bod. 558.) Not knowing at present where to find that edition, I am obliged to rely upon my memory only for this story, which I think highly probable, though it is not mentioned, as I recollect, by any of the other biographers of Boccaccio. A good life of Boccaccio is still much wanted.

The adventures of Florio and Blancofiore, which make the principal subject of the ‘Philocoipo,’ were famous long before Boccaccio, as he himself informs us, l. i. p. 6, ed. 1723. Hieronymo Squarzaficho, in the letter mentioned above, says that the story ‘anchora si nova infino ad ogi scripta in un librazolo de triste et male composto rime—dove il Boccaccio ni cavo questo digno et elegante libro.’ Floris and Blancafior are mentioned as illustrious lovers by Matfres Eymengau de Beziers, a Languedocian poet, in his ‘Breviari d’Amor,’ dated in the year 1288. MS. Reg. 19 C. i. fol. 199. It is probable, however, that the story was enlarged by Boccaccio, and, particularly, I should suppose that the ‘love questions’ in l. v. (the fourth of which questions contains the novel referred to in the text) were added by him.

* The ‘Conte Boiardo,’ the precursor and model of Ariosto in his ‘Orlando Inamorato,’ l. i. ca. 12, has inserted a tale upon the plan of Boccaccio’s two novels, but with considerable alterations, which have carried the story, I apprehend, still further from its British original.

but the best MSS. agree in removing those tales to the end of the Nun's Priest's, and I have not scrupled to adopt this arrangement, which, I think, is indisputably established by the following consideration. When the Monk is called upon for his tale, the pilgrims were near Rochester, [ver. 13,932,] but when the Canon overtakes them they were advanced to Boughton-under-Blee, [ver. 16,024,] twenty miles beyond Rochester, so that the tale of the Canon's Yeoman, and that of the Nun, to which it is annexed, cannot with any propriety be admitted till after the Monk's tale, and consequently not till after the Nun's Priest's, which is inseparably linked to that of the Monk.

§ XXVIII. These two tales, therefore, of the Nun and the Canon's Yeoman, being removed out of the way, the Doctor's comes clearly next to the Franklin's; but how they are to be connected together, and whether at all, is a matter of doubt. What I have printed by way of prologue to the Doctor's tale, I found in one of the best MSS., but only in one; in the others it has no prologue. The first line applies so naturally and smartly to the Franklin's conclusion, that I am strongly inclined to believe it from the hand of Chaucer; but I cannot say so much for the five following. I would therefore only wish these lines to be received, for the present, according to the law phrase, *de bene esse*, till they shall either be more authentically established, or superseded by the discovery of the genuine prologue.

§ XXIX. In the Doctor's tale, beside Livy, who is quoted, Chaucer may possibly have followed Gower in some particulars, who has also related the story of Virginia, 'Conf. Amant.', b. vii., but he has not been a servile copyist of either of them.

§ XXX. The Pardoner's tale has a prologue which connects it with the Doctor's. There is also a pretty long preamble, which may either make part of the prologue, or of the tale. The MSS. differ in this point. I have chosen to throw it into the tale, and to confine the prologue to what I suppose to be its proper use, the introduction of the new speaker. When he is once in complete possession of his office of entertaining the company, his prefaces or digressions should all, I think, be equally considered as parts of his tale.

The mere outline of the Pardoner's tale is to be found in 'Cento Novelle Antiche,' Nov. lxxxii.

§ XXXI. The tale of the Shipman, in the best MSS., has no prologue. What has been printed as such in the common editions is evidently spurious. To supply this defect, I have ventured, upon the authority of one MS. (and, I confess, not one of the best,) to prefix to this tale the prologue which has usually been prefixed to the tale of the Squire. As this prologue was undoubtedly composed by Chaucer, it must have had a place somewhere in this Edition; and if I cannot prove that it was really intended by him for this place, I think the reader will allow that it fills the vacancy extremely well. The Pardoner's tale may very properly be called 'a thrifty tale,' and he himself 'a learned man' [ver. 12,905-8]; and all the latter part, though highly improper in the mouth of the 'courteous Squire,' is perfectly suited to the character of the Shipman.

This tale is generally supposed to be taken from the 'Decameron,' D. viii. n. 1; but I should rather believe that Chaucer was obliged to some old French fableour, from whom Boccaccio had also borrowed the groundwork of his novel, as in the case of the Reeve's tale. Upon either supposition, a great part of the incidents must probably have been of his own invention.

§ XXXII. The transition from the tale of the Shipman to that of the Prioress is happily managed. I have not been able to discover from what legend of the miracles of our Lady the Prioress's tale is taken. From the scene being laid in Asia, it should seem that this was one of the oldest of the many stories which have been propagated, at different times, to excite or justify several merciless persecutions of the Jews, upon the charge of murdering Christian children.* The story of 'Hugh of Lincoln,'

* In the first four months of the 'Acta Sanctorum,' by Bollandus, I find the following names of children canonised, as having been murdered by Jews: 'xxv. Mart. Willielmus, Norwicensis, 1144; Richardus, Parisiis, 1179; xvii. Apr. Rudolphus, Bernæ, 1287; Wernerus, Welsalizæ, an. eod.; Albertus, Poloniæ, 1598.' I suppose the remaining eight months would furnish at least as many more. See a Scottish ballad [*'Rel. of Anc. Poet.'* v. i p. 32.] upon one of these supposed murders. The editor has very ingeniously conjectured that 'Mirryland,' in ver. 1, is a corruption of 'Milan.' Perhaps the real occasion of the ballad may have been what is said to have

which is mentioned in the last stanza, is placed by Matthew Paris under the year 1255.

§ XXXIII. Next to the Prioress, Chaucer himself is called upon for his tale. In the prologue he has dropped a few touches descriptive of his own person and manner, by which we learn that he was used to look much upon the ground; was of a corpulent habit; and reserved in his behaviour. His rhyme of Sir Topas was clearly intended to ridicule the ‘palpable, gross’ fictions of the common rhymers of that age, and still more, perhaps, the meanness of their language and versification. It is full of phrases taken from ‘Isumbras,’ ‘Li Beaus Desconus,’ and other romances in the same style, which are still extant. A few of his imitations of them will be pointed out in the notes.

§ XXXIV. For the more complete reprobation of this species of rhyming, even the Host, who is not to be suspected of too refined a taste, is made to cry out against it, and to cut short Sir Topas in the midst of his adventures. Chaucer has nothing to say for his rhyme, but that ‘it is the best he can,’ [ver. 13,856,] and readily consents to tell another tale; but having just laughed so freely at the bad poetry of his time, he might think it perhaps too invidious to exhibit a specimen of better in his own person, and therefore his other tale is in prose, a mere translation from ‘Le Livre de Melibee et de Dame Prudence,’ of which several copies are still preserved in MS.* It is, in truth, as he calls it, [ver. 13,868,] ‘a moral tale, virtuous,’ and was probably much esteemed in its time; but in this age of levity, I doubt some readers will be apt to regret that he did not rather give us the remainder of Sir Topas.

§ XXXV. The prologue of the Monk’s tale connects it with ‘Melibee.’ The tale itself is certainly formed upon the plan of

happened at Trent, in 1475, to a boy called Simon. The Cardinal Hadrian, about fifty years after, mentioning the rocks of Trent, adds: ‘Quo Judæi ob Simonis cædem ne aspirare quidem audent.’—‘Pref. ad Librum de Serm. Lat.’ The change of the name in the song from Simon to Hugh, is natural enough in this country, where similar stories of Hugh of Norwich, and Hugh of Lincoln, had been long current.

* Two copies of this work are in the Museum, MS. Reg. 19 C. vii. and 19 C. xi., in French prose. Du Fresnoy, ‘Bibliot. des Romans,’ v. ii. p. 248, mentions two copies of the same work ‘en vers, dans la Bibliothèque Seguier.’

Boccaccio's great work, 'De Casibus Virorum Illustrum,' but Chaucer has taken the several stories, of which it is composed, from different authors, who will be particularised in the notes.

§ XXXVI. After a reasonable number of melancholy ditties, or tragedies, as the Monk calls them, he is interrupted by the Knight, and the Host addresses himself to the Nun's Priest, to tell them 'such thing as may their hearts glad.'

The tale of the Nun's Priest is cited by Dryden, together with that of the Wife of Bath, as of Chaucer's own invention. But that great poet was not very conversant with the authors of which Chaucer's library seems to have been composed. The Wife of Bath's tale' has been shewn above to be taken from Gower; and the fable of 'The Cock and the Fox,' which makes the ground of the Nun's Priest's tale, is clearly borrowed from a collection of *Æsop*ean and other fables, by Marie, a French poetess, whose collection of 'Lays' has been mentioned before, in note * p. cxxvi. As her fable is short and well told, and has never been printed, I shall insert it here at length;* and the more

* From MS. Harl. 978, f. 76:—

' D un cok recunta, ki estot
 Sur un fener, e si chantot.
 Par de les li vient un gupilis,
 Si l'apela par muz beaus dix.
 Sire, fet il, muz te voi bel;
 Unc no vi gent oisel.
 Clere voix as sur tute rien,
 Fors tun pere, qe jo vi bien;
 Unc oisel meus ne chanta;
 Mes il le fist meux, kar il cluna.
 Si puis jeo fere, dist il coca.
 Les eles bat, les ollz ad clos,
 Chanter quida plus clerement.
 Li gupilis saut, e sil prent;
 Vers la forest od lui s'en va.
 Par mi un champ, u il passa,
 Current apres tut li pastur;
 Li chiens le huent tut entur.
 Veit le gupilis, ki le cok tient,
 Mar le guaina si par eus vient.
 Va, fet il coca, si lui escrie,
 Qe sui tuena, ne me larras mie.
 Li gupilis volt parler en haut,
 E il coca de sa buche saut.
 Sur un haut fust s'est munter,
 Quant li gupilis s'est reguardes,
 Mut par se tient enfantillé,
 Que il cocs l'ad si enginna.
 De mal talent e de droit ire

willingly, because it furnishes a convincing proof, how able Chaucer was to work up an excellent tale out of very small materials.

§ XXXVII. The sixteen lines, which are printed at the end of the Nun's Priest's tale, might, perhaps, more properly be considered as the beginning of the prologue to the succeeding tale, if it were certain what tale was intended to succeed. In both Dr Askew's MSS. the last of these lines is read thus—

'Sead unto the Nun as ye shall hear ;'

and there are six more lines to introduce her tale; but as these six lines are manifestly forged for the purpose, I have chosen rather to adhere to the other MSS., which acknowledge themselves defective in this part, and give us the Nun's tale, as I

La buche comence a mandire,
 Ke parole quant deverest, taire.
 Li coos respunt, ai dei jeo faire,
 Maudire l'odl, ki vol cluiner,
 Quant il deit guarder e guaider,
 Que mal ne vient a lur seignur.
 Coo funt li fol tut li plasur,
 Parolent quant deivent taisir,
 Teisent quant il deivent parler.'

The resemblance of Chaucer's tale to this fable is obvious; and it is the more probable that he really copied from Marie, because no such fable is to be found, either in the Greek 'Æsop' or in any of the Latin compilations (that I have seen) which went about in the dark ages under the name of 'Æsop.' Whether it was invented by Marie, or whether she translated it, with the rest of her fables, from the Anglo-Saxon version of 'Æsop' by King Alfred, as she says herself, I cannot pretend to determine. Though no Anglo-Saxon version of 'Æsop' be now, as I can find, extant, there may have been one formerly, which may have passed, like many other translation into that language, under the name of Alfred; and it may be urged in support of the probability of Marie's positive assertion, that she appears, from passages in her 'Lays,' to have had some knowledge of English. I must observe that the name of the King, whose English version she professes to follow, is differently stated in different MSS. In the best MS., Harl. 978, it is plainly 'Li Reis Alured.' In a later MS., 'Vesp.' B. xiv., it is 'Li Reis Henris.' Pasquier [*'Recherches'*; l. viii. c. i.] calls him 'Li Roy Auuert,' and Du Chesne (as quoted by Menage, v. 'Roman') 'Li Rois Mires;' but all the copies agree in making Marie declare that she translated her work 'de l'Anglois en Roman.' A Latin Æsop, MS. Reg. 15, A. vii., has the same story of an English version by order of a 'Rex Anglie Afrus.'

have done, without any introduction. It is very probable, I think, that Chaucer himself had not determined whether he should connect the Nun's tale with that of the Nun's Priest, or whether he should interpose a tale or two, or perhaps more, between them.

The tale of the Nun is almost literally translated from the life of St Cecilia, in the 'Legenda Aurea' of Jacobus Januensis. It is mentioned by Chaucer as a separate work, in his 'Legend of Good Women' under the title of 'The Life of Saint Cecile;' and it still retains evident marks that it was not originally composed in the form of a tale to be spoken by the Nun.* However, there can be no doubt that Chaucer meant to incorporate it into this collection of 'Canterbury Tales,' as the prologue of the Canon's Yeoman expressly refers to it.

§ XXXVIII. The introduction of the Canon's Yeoman to tell a tale at a time when so many of the original characters remain to be called upon, appears a little extraordinary. It should seem that some sudden resentment had determined Chaucer to interrupt the regular course of his work, in order to insert a satire against the alchemists. That their pretended science was much cultivated about this time,† and produced its usual evils, may fairly be

* The whole introduction is in the style of a person writing, and not of one speaking. If we compare it with the introduction to the Prioress's tale the difference will be very striking. See particularly ver. 15,546:—

' Yet pray I you, that readen that I write; '

and in ver. 15,530 the relater, or rather writer of the tale, in all the MSS. except one of middling authority, is called 'unworthy son of Eve.' Such little inaccuracies are strong proofs of an unfinished work. [See before, p. 75.]

† The first considerable coinage of gold in this country was begun by Edward III. in the year 1343, and, according to Camden [in his 'Remains,' art. 'Money,'] 'the alchemists did affirm, as an unwritten verity, that the rosenobles, which were coined soon after, were made by projection or multiplication alchemical of Raymond Lully in the Tower of London.' In proof of this, 'besides the tradition of the rabbis in that faculty,' they alleged 'the inscription, "Jesus autem transiens per medium eorum ibat;"' which they profoundly expounded, 'As Jesus passed invisible and in most secret manner by the midst of Pharisees, so that gold was made by invisible and secret art amidst the ignorant.' But others say, 'That text was the only amulet used in that credulous, warfaring age to escape dangers in

inferred from the act, which was passed soon after, 5 H. IV. c. iv., to make it felony 'to multiply gold or silver, or to use the art of multiplication.'

§ XXXIX. In the prologue to the Manciple's tale, the Pilgrims are supposed to be arrived at a little town called 'Bob Up and Down, under the Blee, in Canterbury way.' I cannot find a town of that name in any map, but it must have lain between Boughton, the place last mentioned, and Canterbury. The fable of 'The Crow,' which is the subject of the Manciple's tale, has been related by so many authors, from Ovid down to Gower, that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer principally followed. His skill in new dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted.

§ XL. After the tale of the Manciple, the common editions, battles.' Thus Camden. I rather believe it was an amulet, or charm, principally used against thieves; upon the authority of the following passage of Sir John Mandeville, c. x. p. 137: 'And an half myle fro Nazareth is the Lepe of oure Lord: for the Jewes ladden him upon an highe roche for to make him lepe down and have slain him: but Jesu passed amonges hem, and lept upon another roche; and yit ben the steppes of his feet sene in the roche where he allyghte. And therefore seyn sum men whan thei dreden hem of thefes, on ony weye, or of enemyes: "Jesus autem transiens per medium illorum ibat :" that is to seyne, "Jesus forsothe passyng be the myddes of hem he wente;" in tokene and mynde, that oure Lord passed thorghe out the Jewes crueltee, and scaped safly fro hem, so surely mowe men passen the perile of thefes.' See also Catal. MSS. Harl., n. 2966. It must be owned that a spell against thieves was the most serviceable, if not the most elegant, inscription that could be put upon gold coin.

Ashmole, in his 'Theatrum Chemicum,' p. 443, has repeated this ridiculous story concerning Lully, with additional circumstances, as if he really believed it; though Lully, by the best accounts, had been dead above twenty years before Edward III. began to coin gold.

The same author (*Mercuriophilus Anglicus*, as he styles himself,) has inserted among his 'Hermetique Mysteries' (p. 213,) an old English poem, under the title of 'Hermes Bird,' which (he says in his notes, p. 467,) was thought to have been written originally by Raymund Lully, or, at least, made English by Cremer, Abbot of Westminster, and scholar to Lully, p. 465. The truth is, that the poem is one of Lydgate's, and had been printed by Caxton under its true title, 'The Chorle and the Bird,' and the fable on which it is built is related by Petrus Alphonsus ('De Clericali Disciplina,' MS. Reg. 10 B. xii.) who lived about two hundred years before Lully.

since 1542,* place what is called the Ploughman's tale; but as I cannot understand that there is the least ground of evidence, either external or internal, for believing it to be a work of Chaucer's, I have not admitted it into this edition.

§ XLI. The Parson's prologue, therefore, is here placed next to the Manciple's tale, agreeably to all the MSS. which are

* In the edition of 1542, when the Ploughman's tale was first printed, it was placed *after* the Parson's tale. The editor, whoever he was, had not assurance enough, it should seem, to thrust it into the body of the work. In the subsequent editions, however, as it had probably been well received by the public, upon account of its violent invectives against the Church of Rome, it was advanced to a more honourable station, next to the Manciple's tale, and *before* the Parson's. The only account which we have of any MS. of this tale, is from Mr Speght, who says (note prefixed to Ploughman's tale) that he had 'seen it in written hand in John Stowe's library, in a book of such antiquity, as seemed to have been written near to Chaucer's time.' He does not say that it was among 'The Canterbury Tales,' or that it had Chaucer's name to it. We can, therefore, only judge of it by the internal evidence, and upon that I have no scruple to declare my own opinion, that it has not the least resemblance to Chaucer's manner, either of writing or thinking, in his other works. Though he and Boocaccio have laughed at some of the abuses of religion, and the disorders of ecclesiastical persons, it is quite incredible that either of them, or even Wickliffe himself, would have railed at the whole government of the Church in the style of this Ploughman's tale. If they had been disposed to such an attempt, their times would not have borne it, but it is probable that Chaucer, though he has been pressed into the service of Protestantism by some zealous writers, was as good a Catholic as men of his understanding and rank in life have generally been. The necessity of auricular confession, one of the great scandals of Popery, cannot be more strongly inculcated than it is in the following tale of the Parson.

I will just observe that Spenser seems to speak of the author of the Ploughman's tale as a distinct person from Chaucer, though, in compliance, I suppose, with the taste of his age, he puts them both on the same footing. In the epilogue to 'The Shepherd's Calendar,' he says to his book—

'Dare not to match thy pipe with Tityrus his stile,
Nor with the pilgrim that the ploughman play'd a while.'

I know that Mr Warton, in his excellent 'Observations on Spenser,' v. i. p. 125, supposes this passage to refer to 'The Visions of Pierce Ploughman'; but my reason for differing from him is, that the author of the 'Visions' never, as I remember, speaks of himself in the character of a ploughman.

Of the Pilgrim's tale, which has also, with as little foundation, been attributed to Chaucer (Speght's 'Life of Ch.') I shall speak in another place. [See App. to Pref. A., note p. xix.]

known, and to every edition before 1542. In this prologue, which introduces the last tale upon the journey to Canterbury, Chaucer has again pointed out to us the time of the day; but the hour by the clock is very differently represented in the MSS. In some it is ‘ten,’ in others ‘two;’ in most of the best MSS. ‘four,’ and in one ‘five.’ According to the phenomena here mentioned, the sun being 29° high, and the length of the shadow to the projecting body as eleven to six, it was between four and five. As by this reckoning there were at least three hours left to sunset, one does not well see with what propriety the Host admonishes the Parson to ‘haste him,’ because ‘the sonne will adown,’ and to be ‘fructuous in little space;’ and indeed the Parson, knowing probably how much time he had good, seems to have paid not the least regard to his admonition, for his tale, if it may be so called, is twice as long as any of the others. It is entitled in some MSS. ‘Tractatus de Poenitentiâ, pro Fabula, ut dicitur, Rectoris,’ and I much suspect that it is a translation of some such treatise. I cannot recommend it as a very entertaining or edifying performance at this day, but the reader will be pleased to remember, in excuse both of Chaucer and his editor, that, considering ‘The Canterbury Tales’ as a great picture of life and manners, the piece would not have been complete, if it had not included the religion of the time.

§ XLII. What is commonly called ‘the Retraction’ at the end of the Parson’s tale, in several MSS. makes part of that tale, and certainly the appellation of ‘little treatise’ suits better with a single tale, than with such a voluminous work as the whole body of Canterbury Tales. But then, on the other hand, the recital, which is made in one part of it, of several compositions of Chancer, could probably be made by nobody but himself. I have printed it as I found it in MS. Ask. i., with a few corrections from other MSS.; and in the notes I shall give the best account that I can of it.

Having thus gone through the several parts of ‘The Canterbury Tales’ which are printed in this edition, it may not be improper, in the conclusion of this discourse, to state shortly the parts which are wanting to complete the journey to Canterbury: of the rest of Chaucer’s intended plan, as has been said before,

we have nothing. Supposing, therefore, the number of the pilgrims to have been twenty-nine (see before, § VI.), and allowing the tale of the Canon's Yeoman to stand in the place of that which we had a right to expect from the Knight's Yeoman, the tales wanting will be only those of the five City Mechanics and the Ploughman. It is not likely that the tales told by such characters would have been among the most valuable of the set, but they might, and probably would, have served to link together those which at present are unconnected, and for that reason it is much to be regretted that they either have been lost, or, as I rather believe, were never finished by the author.*

* When we recollect that Chaucer's papers must in all probability have fallen into the hands of his son Thomas, who, at the time of his father's death, was of full age, we can hardly doubt that all proper care was taken of them ; and if the tales in question had ever been inserted among the others, it is scarce conceivable that they should all have slipped out of all the copies of this work of which we have any knowledge or information. Nor is there any sufficient ground for imagining that so many tales could have been suppressed by design ; though such a supposition may perhaps be admitted to account for the loss of some smaller passages. See above, note * p. cviii.

ADDITIONS AND CORRECTIONS TO THE ESSAY, AND
INTRODUCTORY DISCOURSE.

ESSAY, &c., pp. lxxx. lxxxi. note *. A learned person, whose favours I have already acknowledged in the Gloss. v. Gore, cannot acquiesce in this notion, ‘that the greatest part of Chaucer’s heroic verses, when properly written and pronounced, are verses of eleven syllables;’ and for a proof of the contrary he refers me particularly to the Nun’s Priest’s tale, ver. 14,970, and the verses following and preceding. I am sorry, that by an unguarded expression, I should have exposed myself to a controversy which can only be decided by a careful examination of the final syllables of between thirty and forty thousand lines. It would answer my purpose as well to say ‘a great part’ instead of ‘the greatest part;’ but in support of my first idea I must be permitted to observe, that I have carefully examined a hundred lines which precede, and as many which follow ver. 14,970, and I find, that a clear majority of them, as they are printed, end in ‘e’ feminine, and consequently, according to my hypothesis, have an eleventh syllable. I observe, too, that several more ought to have been printed as ending with an ‘e’ feminine; but whether the omission of it should be imputed to the defectiveness of the MSS., or to the negligence of the collator, I cannot be certain. See the concluding note of the ‘Essay,’ &c. pp. xciv. xcv.

Pp. lxxi. lxxii. note * Add—It may not be improper here to observe, further, that a third poem, which is mentioned in the ‘Decameron’ in the same manner with the ‘Theseida’ and the ‘Filostrato,’ was also probably one of Boccaccio’s own compositions. In the conclusion of the third day, it is said that ‘Dioneo et la Fiammetta cominciarono a cantare di Messer Guiglielmo et della dama del Vergiu.’ There is an old French romance upon this subject, as I apprehend, in MS. Bodl. 2386. It is entitled, ‘Le Romant de la Chastelaine du Vergy,’ and begins thus:—

‘Une maniere de gens sont
Qui d’estre loyaux semblant font—
Ainsi qu’il avint en Bourgoigne
D’un chevalier preux et hardi
Et de la dame du Vergy.’

The story is the same, in the main, with that of the 70th novel in the 'Heptameron' of the Queen of Navarre, from which, I suppose, the more modern 'Histoire de la Comtesse du Vergi,' par. 1722, is taken.

I cannot find that any Italian poem upon this subject is now extant; but the unaccountable neglect with which the poetry of Boccaccio has been long treated by those very countrymen of his who idolise his prose, makes the supposition, I think, not improbable, that a small piece of this sort may have been suffered to perish, or even to lurk at this day, unpublished and unnoticed, in some Italian library.

Discourse, &c., p. cv. note * l. 10. 'The latest historical fact.' This passage should be compared with the note on ver. 14,709, and corrected accordingly.

P. cxxi. § XIX. Add—I am obliged to Mr Steevens for pointing out to me a story which has a great resemblance, in its principal incidents, to the Friar's tale. It is quoted by D'Artigny, 'Memoires d'Histoire,' &c., t. iii. p. 238, from a collection of sermons by an anonymous Dominican, printed about the beginning of the sixteenth century, under the title of 'Sermones Discipuli.'

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

THE PROLOGUE.

WHENNÈ that April with his showrēs sote¹
The drought of March hath pierced to the rote,²
And bathed every vein in such licour,
Of which virtúe engendred is the flower;
When Zephyrus ekē with his sotē breath
Inspired hath in every holt³ and heath
The tender croppēs, and the youngē sun
Hath in the Ram his halfē course yrun,
And smallē fowlēs maken melody,
That sleepen allē night with open eye,
So pricketh them natûre in their courâges;⁴
Then longen folk to go on pilgrimages,
And palmers for to seeken strangē strands,
To servē hallows⁵ couth⁶ in sundry lands;
And specially, from every shirē's end
Of Engleland, to Canterbury they wend,
The holy blissful martyr for to seek,
That them hath holpen, when that they were sick.
Befell that, in that season on a day,

¹ Sweet.

² Root.

³ Forest, or
grove.

10

⁴ Spirita.

⁵ Holiness.
⁶ Known.

In Southwark at the Tabard* as I lay,
Ready to wenden on my pilgrimage
To Canterbury with devout courāge,
At night was come into that hostelry
Well nine-and-twenty in a company
Of sundry folk, by áventure yfall
In fellowship, and pilgrims were they all,
That toward Canterbury woulden ride.
The chambers and the stables weren wide,
And well we weren eased attē best.¹

And shortly, when the sun was gone to rest,
So had I spoken with them evereach one,
That I was of their fellowship anon,
And madē forword² early for to rise,
To take our way there as I you devise.
But natheless, while I have time and space,
Or that I further in this talē pace,
Me thinketh it accordant to reason,
To tellen you allē the condition
Of each of them, so as it seemed me,
And which they weren, and of what degree;
And eke in what array that they were in:
And at a knight then will I first begin.

A KNIGHT there was, and that a worthy man,
That from the timē that he first began
To riden out, he loved chivalry,
Truth and honour, freedom and courtesy.
Full worthy was he in his lordēs war,
And thereto had he ridden, no man farre,³
As well in Christendom as in Heatheness,
And ever honour'd for his worthiness.

40

50

At Alisandre⁴ he was when it was won.

* 'Tabard :' sign of the inn at Southwark, since called Talbot.

¹ Excel-
lently ac-
commo-
dated.

² Promise.

³ Farther.

⁴ Alexan-
dria.

Full often time he had the board begun¹
 Aboven allē natiōns in Prusse.
 In Lettowe² had he reysed³ and in Russe,
 No Christian man so oft of his degree.
 In Gernade⁴ at the siege eke had he be
 Of Algesir,⁵ and ridden in Belmarie.*
 At Leyest was he, and at Satalie,†
 When they were won; and in the Greatē Sea.⁶
 At many a noble army had he be.
 At mortal battles had he been fifteen,
 And foughten for our faith at Tramissene§
 In listēs thriës, and aye slain his foe.
 This ilkē⁷ worthy knight had been also
 Sometime with the lord of Palatie,||
 Against another heathen in Turkie:
 And evermore he had a sovereign pris.⁸
 And though that he was worthy he was wise,
 And of his port as meek as is a maid.
 He never yet no villainy⁹ ne said
 In all his life, unto no manner wight.
 He was a very perfect gentle knight.
 But for to tellen you of his array,
 His horse was good, but he ne was not gay.
 Of fustian he weared a gipon,¹⁰
 Allē besmotter'd¹¹ with his habergeon,
 For he was late ycome from his viāge,¹²
 And wentē for to do his pilgrimage.

With him there was his son, a youngē SQUIRE,
 A lover, and a lusty bacheler,
 With lockēs curl'd as they were laid in press.

52 ¹ Sat at the head of the table.

² Lithuania.

³ Travelled.

⁴ Grenada.

⁵ Algiers.

⁶ Mediterranean.

⁷ Same.

⁸ Praise.

⁹ Anything un-gentle-manly.

¹⁰ Cassock.

¹¹ Soiled.

¹² Journey.

* 'Belmarie:' not known in any Geography.

† 'Leyes:' in Armenia. ‡ 'Satalie:' ancient Attalia.

§ 'Tramissene:' a kingdom in Africa.

|| 'Palatie:' Palatine in Anatolia.

¹ Equal.² Active.³ Military expedition.⁴ Considering the short time he had had.⁵ Fluting, whistling.⁶ Night-time.⁷ Arrow.⁸ Knew.⁹ Guard for an archer's arm.

Of twenty year of age he was I guess. 82
 Of his stature he was of even¹ length,
 And wonderly deliver,² and great of strength.
 And he had been sometime in chevachie,³
 In Flanders, in Artois, and in Picardie,
 And borne him well, as of so little space,⁴
 In hope to standen in his lady's grace.
 Embroidered was he, as it were a mead
 All full of fresh flowrës, white and red. 90
 Singing he was, or floyting⁵ all the day,
 He was as fresh as is the month of May.
 Short was his gown, with sleevës long and wide.
 Well could he sit on horse, and fairë ride.
 He couldë songës make, and well indite,
 Joust and eke dance, and well pourtray and write.
 So hot he loved, that by nightertale⁶
 He slept no more than doth the nightingale.
 Courteous he was, lowly, and serviceable,
 And carv'd before his father at the table. 100

A YEOMAN had he, and servânts no mo
 At that time, for him list to ride so;
 And he was clad in coat and hood of green.
 A sheaf of peacock arrows bright and keen
 Under his belt he bare full thriftily.
 Well could he dress his takel⁷ yeomanly:
 His arrows drooped not with feathers low;
 And in his hand he bare a mighty bow.

A nut-head^{*} had he, with a brown visâge:
 Of wood-craft coud⁸ he well all the usâge: 110
 Upon his arm he bare a gay bracer,⁹
 And by his side a sword and a buckler,
 And on that other side a gay dagger,

* ‘A nut-head:’ head like a nut, the hair being short.

Harnessed well, and sharp as point of spear :
 A Christopher¹ on his breast of silver sheen.
 An horn he bare, the baldric² was of green :
 A forster³ was he soothly⁴ as I guess.

114

¹ Image of
St Christopher.
² Belt.
³ Forester.
⁴ Truly.

There was also a Nun, a PRIORESS,
 That of her smiling was full simple and coy ;
 Her greatest oath n'as⁵ but by Saint Eloy ;⁶
 And she was cleped⁷ Madame Eglantine.
 Full well she sang the servicë divine,
 Entuned in her nose full sweetely ;
 And French she spake full fair and fetisly,⁸
 After the school of Stratford attë Bow,
 For French of Paris was to her unknow.
 At meatë was she well ytaught withal ;
 She let no morsel from her lippës fall,
 Ne wet her fingers in her saucë deep.
 Well could she carry a morsel, and well keep,
 That no drop ne fell upon her breast.
 In courtesy was set full much her lest.⁹
 Her over-lippë wiped she so clean,
 That in her cuppë was no farthing¹⁰ seen
 Of greasë, when she drunken had her draught ;
 Full seemely after her meat she raught.¹¹
 And sickerly¹² she was of great disport,
 And full pleasánt, and amiable of port,
 And pained¹³ her to counterfeiten¹⁴ cheer
 Of court, and be estately of mannér,
 And to be holden digne¹⁵ of reverence.

120

⁵ Was not
more
than.
⁶ Eloisa.
⁷ Called.

⁸ Properly.

130

⁹ Pleasure.

¹⁰ Any
very
small
thing.

¹¹ Reach-
ed.

¹² Surely.

140

¹³ Exerted
herself.

¹⁴ Assume
appear-
ance.

¹⁵ Worthy.

But for to speaken of her conscience,
 She was so charitable and so piteous,
 She wouldë weep if that she saw a mouse
 Caught in a trap, if it were dead or bled.
 Of smallë houndës had she, that she fed

¹ Bread of
the finest
flour.

² Staff.

³ Covering
for the
neck.

⁴ Well-
shaped.

⁵ Certain-
ly.

⁶ Certain-
ly.

⁷ Of a low
stature.

⁸ Neat.

⁹ String.

¹⁰ Adorn-
ed.

With roasted flesh, and milk, and wastel bread.¹ 147

But sore wept she if one of them were dead,

Or if men smote it with a yardë² smart:

And all was conscience and tender heart.

Full seemly her wimple³ ypinched was;

Her nose tretis;⁴ her eyen gray as glass;

Her mouth full small, and thereto soft and red;

But sickerly⁵ she had a fair foreh ad.

It was almost a spann  broad I trow;

For hardily⁶ she was not undergrow.⁷

Full fetise⁸ was her cloak, as I was ware.

Of small cor l about her arm she bare

A pair⁹ of bead s, gauded¹⁰ all with green;

And thereon hung a brooch of gold full sheen, 160

On which was first ywritten a crowned A,

And after, *Amor vincit omnia*.

Another NUN also with her had she,

That was her chapell ine, and PRIEST S three.

¹¹ Famous
for skill
or supe-
riority.

¹² A bold
rider.

¹³ Hunt-
ing.

A MONK there was, a fair for the mast'ry,¹¹

An out-rider,¹² that loved venery;¹³

A manly man, to been an abbot able.

Full many a dainty horse had he in stable:

And when he rode, men might his bridle hear

Jingling in a whistling wind as clear,

And eke as loud, as doth the chapel bell,

There as this lord was keeper of the cell.

170

¹⁴ Bene-
dict.

¹⁵ Some-
what.

¹⁶ Same.

¹⁷ For.

The rule of Saint Maur and of Saint Beneit,¹⁴

Because that it was old and somedeal¹⁵ strait,

This ilk ¹⁶ monk let old  thing s pace,

And held after the new  world the trace.

He gave not of¹⁷ the text a pulled hen,

That saith, that hunters be not holy men;

Ne that a monk, when he is reck less;

Is like to a fish that is waterless;	180	
This is to say, a monk out of his cloister.		
This ilkë text held he not worth an oyster;		
And I say his opinion was good.		
What should he study, and make himselven wood, ¹		¹ Mad.
Upon a book in cloister alway to pore,		
Or swinken ² with his handës, and labóur,		² Toil.
As Austin bit? ³ how shall the world be served?		³ Bida.
Let Austin have his swink to him reserved.		
Therefore he was a prickasour ⁴ a right:		⁴ Hard rider.
Greyhounds he had as swift as fowl of flight:	190	
Of pricking ⁵ and of hunting for the hare		⁵ Riding.
Was all his lust, ⁶ for no cost would he spare.		⁶ Pleasure.
I saw his sleeveës purfiled ⁷ at the hand		⁷ Wrought at the edge.
With gris, ⁸ and that the finest of the land.		⁸ Gray fur.
And for to fasten his hood under his chin,		
He had of gold ywrought a curious pin:		
A love-knot in the greater end there was.		
His head was bald, and shone as any glass,		
And eke his face, as it had been anoint;		
He was a lord full fat and in good point;	200	
His eyen steep, ⁹ and rolling in his head,		⁹ Deep sunk.
That steamed as a furnace of a lead. ¹⁰		¹⁰ Furnace for melting lead.
His bootës supple, his horse in great estate,		
Now certainly he was a fair prelate;		
He was not pale as a forpined ¹¹ ghost;		¹¹ Wasted.
A fat swan loved he best of any roast.		
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.		
A FRIAR there was, a wanton and a merry,		
A limitour, ¹² a full solemnë man.		¹² Licensed to beg within certain limits.
In all the orders four is none that can ¹³	210	
So much of dalliance and fair languáge.		¹³ Known.
He had ymade full many a marriáge		

Of youngë women, at his owen cost.
 Until his order he was a noble post;
 Full well beloved, and familiar was he
 With franklins over all in his country,
 And eke with worthy women of the town:
 For he had power of confession,
 As said himself, more than a curate,
 For of his order he was licentiate.
 Full sweetely heard he confession,
 And pleasant was his absolution.
 He was an easy man to give penáce,

218

¹ Those he knew.
² Deserves to be shriven.
³ Boast.

There as he wist¹ to have a good pittáce:
 For unto a poor order for to give
 Is signë that a man is well yshrive.²
 For if he gave, he durstë make avant,³
 He wistë that a man was repentant.
 For many a man so hard is of his heart,
 He may not weep although him sorë smart.
 Therefore instead of weeping and prayéres,
 Men must give silver to the poorë freres.

230

⁴ Stuffed.
⁵ Some kind of songa.
⁶ Prize.

His tippet was aye farsed⁴ full of knives,
 And pins, for to given fairë wives;
 And certainly he had a merry note:
 Well could he sing and playen on a rote;
 Of yeddings⁵ he bare utterly the pris.⁶
 His neck was white as the flour-de-lis.
 Thereto he strong was as a champion,
 And knew well the tavérns in every town.
 And every hosteler and gay tapstére,
 Better than a lazár or a beggére,
 For unto such a worthy man as he
 Accordeth nought, as by his faculty,
 To haven with sike⁷ lazars acquaintance.
 It is not honest, it may not advance,

240

⁷ Such.

As for to dealen with no such pouraille,¹
But all with rich, and sellers of vitaille.
And over all, there² as profit should arise,
Courteous he was, and lowly of service;
There n'as³ no man nowhere so virtuous.
He was the bestë beggar in all his house:
And gave a certain farmë⁴ for the grant,
None of his brethren came in his haunt.
For though a widow haddë but a shoe,
(So pleasant was his *In principio*,*)
Yet would he have a farthing or he went;
His purchase was well better than his rent.
And rage he could as it had been a whelp,
In lovëdays there could he muchel help.⁵
For there was he not like a cloisterer,
With threadbare cope, as is a poor scholer,
But he was like a master or a pope.
Of double worsted was his semicope,⁶
That round was as a bell out of the press.
Somewhat he lisped for his wantonness,
To make his English sweet upon his tongue;
And in his harping, when that he had sung
His eyen twinkled in his head aright,
As do the starrës in a frosty night.
This worthy limitour was cleped Hubérd.

247

¹ Offal.² Where.³ Was not.⁴ Rent.

260

⁵ Of great service in love-affairs.⁶ Short cloak.

270

A MERCHANT was there with a forked beard,
In motley, and high on horse he sat,
And on his head a Flandrish beaver hat.
His bootës clasped fair and fetisly.⁷
His reasons spake he full solemnely,
Sounding alway the increase of his winning.
He would the sea were kept⁸ for any thing

⁷ Neatly.⁸ Guarded.

* ‘*In principio*:’ In the beginning—the first words of the Vulgate.

¹ French crowns.
² Employed.

³ A money borrowing agreement.
⁴ Know not.
⁵ Oxford.
⁶ Gone.

⁷ Thin.
⁸ Poorly.
⁹ Uppermost.
¹⁰ Short cloak.
¹¹ Rather.

¹² Get hold of.

¹³ Study.

Betwixen Middleburgh and Orëwell.*
Well could he in exchanges shieldës¹ sell.
This worthy man full well his wit beset;²
There wistë no wight that he was in debt,
So steadfastly did he his governance
With his bargáins, and with his chevisance.³
Forsooth he was a worthy man withal,
But sooth to say, I n'ot⁴ how men him call.

A CLERK there was of Oxenford⁵ also,
That unto logic haddë long ygo.⁶
As lean was his horse as is a rake,
And he was not right fat, I undertake;
But looked hollow,⁷ and thereto soberly.⁸
Full threadbare was his overest⁹ courtepy,¹⁰
For he had gotten him yet no benefice,
Ne was nouȝt worldly to have an office.

For him was lever¹¹ have at his bed's head
A twenty bookës, clothed in black or red,
Of Aristotle, and his philosophy,

Than robës rich, or fiddle, or psalt'ry.
But all be that he was a philosópher,
Yet haddë he but little gold in coffer,

But all that he might of his friendës hent,¹²
On bookës and on learning he it spent,
And busily 'gan for the soulës pray

Of them, that gave him wherewith to scholay.¹³
Of study took he mostë care and heed.

Not a word spake he morë than was need;
And that was said in form and reverence,
And short and quick, and full of high senténce.
Sounding in moral virtue was his speech,
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

279

290

300

310

* 'Orewell:' a seaport in Essex.

A SERGEANT OF THE LAW wary and wise,
That often had ybeen at the Parvis,*
There was also, full rich of excellence.
Discreet he was, and of great reverence:
He seemed such, his wordēs were so wise,
Justice he was full often in assize.

311

By patent, and by plein¹ commission;
For his sciénce, and for his high renown,
Of fees and robēs had he many one.
So great a purchaser was nowhere none.
All was fee simple to him in effect,
His purchasing might not be in suspect.
Nowhere so busy a man as he there n'as,
And yet he seemed busier than he was.
In termēs had he case and doomēs² all,
That from the time of King Will. weren fall.
Thereto he could indite, and make a thing,
There couldē no wight pinch³ at his writing.
And every statue coud⁴ he plain by rote.
He rode but homely in a medley⁵ coat,
Girt with a seint⁶ of silk, with barrēs small;
Of his array tell I no longer tale.

¹ Full

820

² Judg-
ments.³ Find a
flaw.⁴ Knew.830 ⁵ Mixed in
colour.⁶ Girdle.

A FRANKĒLIN was in this company;
White was his beard, as is the daiēsy.
Of his complexiōn he was sanguīne.
Well loved he by the morrow⁷ a sop in wine.
To liven in delight was ever his won,⁸
For he was Epicurus' owen son,
That held opinion, that plein⁹ delight
Was verily felicity perfite.
An householder, and that a great was he;

⁷ In the
morning.⁸ Custom.⁹ Full.

840

* 'Parvis:' the portico of St Paul's, frequented by lawyers for consulta-
tion.

	Saint Julian* he was in his country. His bread, his ale, was alway after one; A better envined ¹ man was nowhere none, Withouten bake-meat never was his house, Of fish and flesh, and that so plenteous, It snowēd in his house of meat and drink, Of allē dainties that men could of think, After the sundry seasons of the year, So changed he his meat and his soupére. 342
* Stored with wine.	Full many a fat partridge had he in mew, And many a bream, and many a luce ² in stew. Woe was his cook,† but if his saucē were Poignant and sharp, and ready all his gear. His table dormant ³ in his hall alway Stood ready covered all the long day. 350
* Pike.	At sessions there was he lord and sire. Full often time he was knight of the shire.
* Fixed.	An anlace, ⁴ and a gipciere ⁵ all of silk, Hung at his girdle, white as morrow milk. A sheriff had he been, and a countour. ⁶ 360
* Dagger. * Purse.	Was nowhere such a worthy vavasour. ⁷
* County baillif. * Magis- trate.	An HABERDASHER, and a CARPENTER, A WEBBE, ⁸ a DYER, and a TAPISER, ⁹ Were all yclothed in one livery, Of a solémn and great fraternitie. Full fresh and new their gear ypicked ¹⁰ was. Their knivēs were ychaped ¹¹ not with brass, But all with silver wrought full clean and well, Their girdles and their pouches every deal. ¹² Well seemed each of them a fair burgess, 370 To sitten in a guild-hall, on the dais. ¹³
* Spruce. * Mount- ed.	* ‘Saint Julian :’ the patron of hospitality. † ‘Woe was his cook :’ woe to his cook if his sauce were not poignant, &c.
* In every part.	
* Seat of distinc- tion.	

Evereach, for the wisdom that he can,¹
 Was shapelich² for to be an alderman.
 For chattels hadden they enough and rent,
 And eke their wivës would it well assent:
 And ellës certainly they were to blame.
 It is full fair to be ycleped madáme,
 And for to go to vigils³ all before,
 And have a mantle reallich ybore.⁴

373 ¹ Knew.² Fitted.

A Cook they haden with them for the nones,⁵
 To boil the chickens and the marrow bones,
 And powder merchant, tart and galingale.⁶
 Well could he know a draught of London ale.
 He couldë roast, and seethe, and broil, and fry,
 Maken mortrewës,⁷ and well bake a pie.
 But great harm was it, as it thoughtë me,
 That on his shin a mormal⁸ haddë he.
 For blanc manger* that made he with the best.

³ Festival eve.⁴ Royally carried.⁵ Occasion.⁶ Sweet cyperus.⁷ Kind of broth.⁸ Ulcer.

A SHIPMAN was there, wonned far by West:
 For ought I wot, he was of Dartëmouth.
 He rode upon a rounchy,⁹ as he couth,¹⁰
 All in a gown of falding¹¹ to the knee.
 A dagger hanging by a lace had he
 About his neck under his arm adown;
 The hot summer had made his hue all brown;
 And certainly he was a good fellow.
 Full many a draught of wine he haddë draw
 From Bourdeaux-ward, while that the chapman sleep;
 Of nicë consciénce took he no keep.
 If that he fought, and had the higher hand,
 By water he sent them home to every land.

390

⁹ Hack.¹⁰ Could.¹¹ Coarse cloth.

* ‘Blanc manger:’ very different from the present dish of the name.
 One part of it was the brawn of a capon.

But of his craft to reckon well his tides, 403
 His streamës and his strandës him besides,
 His herberow,¹ his moon, and his lodemanage,²
 There was none such, from Hull unto Carthage.
 Hardy he was, and wise, I undertake:
 With many a tempest had his beard been shake.
 He knew well all the havens, as they were,
 From Gothland, to the Cape de Finisterre,
 And every creek in Bretagne and in Spain: 410
 His barge ycleped was the Magdelain.

With us there was a DOCTOR OF PHYSIC,
 In all this world ne was their none him like
 To speak of physic, and of surgery:
 For he was grounded in astronomy.
 He kept his patient a full great deal
 In hourës by his magic natural.
 Well could he fortunen³ the áscendent
 Of his imáges for his patiënt. 420

He knew the cause of every malady,
 Were it of cold, or hot, or moist, or dry,
 And where engendred, and of what humour.
 He was a very perfect practisour.

The cause yknow,⁴ and of his harm the root,
 Anon he gave to the sick man his boot.⁵
 Full ready had he his apothecaries
 To send him druggës, and his lectuaries,
 For each of them made other for to win:

Their friendship n'as⁶ not new to begin, 430
 Well knew he the old Esculapius,
 And Dioscorides, and eke Rufus;
 Old Hippocras, Hali, and Gallien;
 Serapion, Rasis, and Avicen;
 Averrois, Damascene, and Constantin;

¹ Harbour-
age.
² Pilotage.

³ Make
lucky.

⁴ Known.

⁵ Remedy.

⁶ Was not.

Bernard, and Gatisden, and Gilbertin.
Of his diet measurable was he,
For it was of no superfluity,
But of great nourishing, and digestible.
His study was but little on the Bible.

436

In sanguine¹ and in perse² he clad was, all
Lined with taffata, and with sendall.³
And yet he was but easy of dispence:⁴
He kept that he won in the pestilence.
For gold in physic is a cordial;
Therefore he loved gold in special.

440

¹ Red.
² Blue.
³ Kind of silk.
⁴ Expense.

A good WIFE was there of besidë BATH,
But she was some deal deaf, and that was scath.⁵
Of cloth-making she had such an haunt,⁶
She passed them of Ypres, and of Gaunt.⁷
In all the parish wife ne was there none,
That to the offering⁸ before her shoulde gone,
And if there did, certain so wroth was she,
That she was out of alle charity.
Her coverchiefs⁹ weren full fine of ground;
I durstë swear, they weigheden a pound;
That on the Sunday were upon her head.
Her hosen weren of fine scarlet red,
Full strait ytied, and shoes full moist¹⁰ and new.
Bold was her face, and faire and red of hue.
She was a worthy woman all her live,
Husbands at the church door had she had
five,
Withouten other company in youth;
But thereof needeth not to speak as nouth.¹¹
And thrice had she been at Jerusalem;
She haddë passed many a strange stream;
At Rome she haddë been, and at Bologne,

⁵ Ill.⁶ Custom.

450

⁷ Ghent.⁸ Offering at Mass.⁹ Head-cloths.

460

¹⁰ Fresh.¹¹ Now.

	In Galice* at Saint James, and at Cologne;	468
* Knew.	She coudë ¹ much of wandering by the way.	
* Query, Buck-toothed.	Gat-toothed ² was she, soothly for to say.	
* Covered with a wimple.	Upon an ambler easily she sat, Ywimplcd ³ well, and on her head an hat, As broad as is a buckler, or a targe. A foot-mantle about her hippës large, And on her feet a pair of spurrës sharp.	
* Talk.	In fellowship well could she laugh and carp. ⁴	
* Knew.	Of remedies of love she knew perchance, For of that art she coud ⁵ the oldë dance.	
* Work.	A good man there was of religiōn, That was a poorë PARSON of a town:	480
* Times.	But rich he was of holy thought and werk. ⁶ He was also a learned man, a clerk, That Christës gospel truly woulde preach. His parishens devoutly would he teach. Benign he was, and wonder diligent, And in adversity full patient: And such he was yproved often sithës. ⁷	
* Great and small.	Full loth were him to cursen for his tithe ^s , But rather would he given out of doubt, Unto his poorë parishens about, Of his offering, and eke of his súbstance. He could in little thing have suffisance.	490
* Gave.	Wide was his parish, and houses far asunder, But he ne left nought for no rain ne thunder, In sickness and in mischief to visit The farthest in his parish, much and lite, ⁸ Upon his feet, and in his hand a staff, This noble ensample to his sheep he yaf, ⁹	

* ‘Galice :’ Galicia, where the famous shrine of St James of Compostella was.

That first he wrought, and afterward he taught. 499
 Out of the gospel he the wordēs caught,
 And this figure he added yet thereto,
 That if gold rustē, what should iron do?
 For if a priest be foul, on whom we trust,
 No wonder is a lewēd¹ man to rust:
 And shame it is, if that a priest take keep,
 To see a shitten shepherd, and clean sheep:
 Well ought a priest ensample for to give,
 By his cleanness, how his sheep should live.

He settē not his benefice to hire,
 And let his sheep accumbred² in the mire, 510
 And ran unto London, unto Saint Poul's,
 To seeken him a chantry³ for souls,
 Or with a brotherhood to be withhold:⁴
 But dwelt at home, and keptē well his fold,
 So that the wolf ne made it not miscarry.
 He was a shepherd, and no mercenary.

And though he holy were, and virtuous,
 He was to sinful men not dispitous,⁵
 Ne of his speechē dangerous ne dign,⁶
 But in his teaching dīscreet and benign. 520
 To drawen folk to heaven, with fairēness,
 By good ensample, was his business:
 But it were⁷ any person obstinate,
 What so he were of high, or low estate,
 Him would he snibben⁸ sharply for the nones.⁹
 A better priest I trow that nowhere none is.
 He waited after no pomp ne reverence,
 Ne maked him no spiced¹⁰ conscience,
 But Christēs lore, and his apostles twelve,
 He taught, but first he follow'd it himselfe. 530

¹ Ignorant.² Entangled.³ Endowment for singing Mass.⁴ Detained.⁵ Severe.⁶ Disdainful.⁷ But were it.⁸ Reprove.⁹ Occasion.¹⁰ Nice.

With him there was a PLOUGHMAN, was his brother,

¹ Load.² Labourer.³ Pain.⁴ Ditch.⁵ Were
not.⁶ More.⁷ Knot of a
tree.⁸ Top.⁹ Hairs.¹⁰ Nostrils.

That had ylaid of dung full many a fother.¹
 A truë swinker,² and a good was he,
 Living in peace, and perfect charity.
 God loved he bestë with all his heart
 At allë times, were it gain or smart,³
 And then his neighebour right as himselfe.
 He woulde thresh, and thereto dike,⁴ and delve,
 For Christës sake, for every poorë wight,
 Withouten hire, if it lay in his might.

532

540

His tithes payed he full fair and well
 Both of his proper swink, and his chattel
 In a tabard he rode upon a mere.

There was also a Reeve,* and a Millere,
 A Sompnour,† and a Pardoner‡ also,
 A Manciple,§ and myself, and there n'ere⁵ no mo.⁶

The MILLER was a stout carle for the nones,
 Full big he was of brawn, and eke of bones;
 That proved well, for over all where he came,
 At wrestling he would bear away the ram.
 He was short shouldered, broad, a thickë gnarre,⁷
 There n'as no door, that he n'old heave off bar,
 Or break it at a running with his head.
 His beard as any sow or fox was red,
 And thereto broad, as though it were a spade.
 Upon the cop⁸ right of his nose he had
 A wart, and thereon stood a tuft of heres,⁹
 Red as the bristles of a sowës ears.
 His nosë-thirlës¹⁰ blackë were and wide.

550

* ‘Reeve:’ a land steward.

† ‘Sompnour:’ an apparitor, who summoned people to ecclesiastical courts.

‡ ‘Pardoner:’ a seller of pardons.

§ ‘Manciple:’ from manceps (a baker)—one who purchased victuals for the Inns of Court.

A sword and buckler bare he by his side.
 His mouth as widē was as a furnáce.
 He was a jangler,¹ and a goliardeis,²
 And that was most of sin, and harlotries.
 Well could he stolen corn, and tollen³ thrice.
 And yet he had a thumb of gold pardie.⁴
 A white coat and a blue hood weared he.
 A baggēpipe well could he blow and soun,
 And therewithal he brought us out of town.

A gentle MANCIPLE was there of a temple,
 Of which achatours⁵ mighten take ensample
 For to be wise in buying of vitaille.
 For whether that he paid, or took by taile,⁶
 Algatē⁷ he waited so in his achate,⁸
 That he was aye before in good estate.
 Now is not that of God a full fair grace
 That such a lewēd⁹ mannēs wit shall pace¹⁰
 The wisdom of an heap of learned men?

Of masters had he more than thriës ten,
 That were of law expert and curious:
 Of which there was a dozen in that house,
 Worthy to be stewārds of rent and land
 Of any lord that is in Engleland,
 To maken him live by his proper good,
 In honour debtēless, but if he were wood,¹¹
 Or live as scarcely, as him list desire;
 And able for to helpen all a shire
 In any case that mightē fallen or hap;
 And yet this Manciple set their aller cap.*

The REEVĒ was a slender choleric man,
 His beard was shave as nigh as ever he can.

* 'Set their aller cap:' made a fool of them all.

560

¹ Babbler.² Reveller.³ Told.⁴ A French oath.570 ⁵ Buyers.⁶ Tally, credit.⁷ Always.⁸ Purchase.⁹ Ignorant.¹⁰ Pass.

580

¹¹ Mad.

590

His hair was by his earës round yshorn ;
 His top was docked like a priest beforne.
 Full longë were his leggës, and full lean,
 Ylike a staff, there was no calf yseen.
 Well could he keep a garner and a bin :¹
 There was none auditor could on him win.
 Well wist he by the drought, and by the rain,
 The yielding of his seed, and of his grain.
 His lordës sheep, his neat, and his dairy,
 His swine, his horse, his store, and his poultry,
 Were wholly in this Reeve's governing,
 And by his covenant gave he reckoning,
 Since that his lord was twenty year of age;
 There could no man bring him in aréarage.
 There n'as bailiff, ne herd, ne other hine,²
 That he ne knew his sleight and his covine :³
 They were adrad⁴ of him, as of the death.
 His wonning⁵ was full fair upon an heath,
 With greenë trees yshadowed was his place.
 He could better than his lord purchase.
 Full rich he was ystored privily.
 His lord well could he pleaseen subtilly,
 To give and lend him of his owen good,
 And have a thank, and yet a coat and hood.
 In youth he learned had a good mistére.⁶
 He was a well good wright, a carpentére.
 This Reeve sate upon a right good stot,⁷
 That was all pomely⁸ gray, and hightë Scot.
 A long surcoat of perse⁹ upon he had,
 And by his side he bare a rusty blade.
 Of Norfolk was this Reeve, of which I tell,
 Beside a town, men clepen Baldeswell.
 Tucked he was, as is a friar, about,
 And ever he rode the hinderest of the rout.

591

600

610

620

¹ Recep-tacles for grain.² Hind.³ Secret manage-ment.⁴ Afraid.⁵ Abode.⁶ Trade.⁷ Stallion.⁸ Dapple.⁹ Blue.

A SOMPNOUR was there with us in that place, 625
 That had a fire-red cherubinnës face,
 For sausefleme¹ he was, with eyen narrow.
 As hot he was, and likerous² as a sparrow,
 With scalld browës black, and pilled³ beard:
 Of his visage children were sore afeard
 There n'as quicksilver, litharge,⁴ ne brimstone,
 Boras, ceruse,⁵ ne oil of tartar none,
 Ne ointëment that wouldë cleanse or bite,
 That him might helpen of his whelkës⁶ white,
 Ne of the knobbes⁷ sitting on his cheeks.
 Well loved he garlic, onions, and leeks,
 And for to drink strong wine as red as blood.
 Then would he speak, and cry as he were wood;⁸
 And when that he well drunken had the wine,
 Then would he speaken no word but Latin. 640
 A fewë termës coud⁹ he, two or three,
 That he had learned out of some decree;
 No wonder is, he heard it all the day.
 And eke ye knownen well, how that a jay
 Can clepen¹⁰ 'Wat', as well as can the Pope.
 But whoso would in other thing him grope,¹¹
 Then had he spent all his philosophy,
 Aye, *Questio quid juris*,^{*} would he cry.
 He was a gentle harlot¹² and a kind;
 A better fellów should a man not find
 He wouldë suffer for a quart of wine,
 A good fellów to have his concubine
 A twelvemonth, and excuse him at the full.
 Full privily a finch eke could he pull.¹³
 And if he found owhere¹⁴ a good fellaw,
 He wouldë teachen him to have none awe
 In such a case of the archëdeacon's curse;

¹ Pimpled
face.

² Lascivious.

³ Scanty.

⁴ White lead.

⁵ Another name for white lead.

⁶ Pustules.

⁷ Buds or buttons.

⁸ Mad.

⁹ Knew.

¹⁰ Call.

¹¹ Search.

¹² Hiring.

¹³ Pluck a pigeon.

¹⁴ Anywhere.

* 'Questio quid juris.' a cant Law-Latin phrase.

¹ Except.

But if¹ a mannës soul were in his purse;
 For in his purse he should ypunished be.
 Purse is the archëdeacon's hell, said he.
 But well I wote, he lied right indeed:
 Of cursing ought each guilty man him dread.
 For curse will slay right as assoiling saveth,
 And also 'ware him of a *significavit*.²

658

² Kind of writ.³ Within reach.⁴ At his pleasure.⁵ Counsel.⁶ Ale-house sign.

In danger³ had he at his owen guise⁴
 The youngë girlës of the diocese,
 And knew their counsel, and was of their rede.⁵
 A garland had he set upon his head,
 As great as it were for an alëstake:⁶
 A buckler had he made him of a cake.

670

⁷ Bass.

With him there rode a gentle PARDONER
 Of Ronceval, his friend and his compeer,
 That straight was comen from the court of Romë.
 Full loud he sang, Come hither, lovë, to me.
 This Sompnour bare to him a stiff burdoun,⁷

⁸ A line or strip.

Was never trump of half so great a soun.
 This pardoner had hair as yellow as wax,
 But smooth it hung, as doth a strike⁸ of flax:
 By ounces hung his lockës that he had,

⁹ Shreda.

And therewith he his shoulders oversprad.
 Full thin it lay, by culpons⁹ on and on,
 But hood, for jollity, ne weared he none,
 For it was trussed up in his wallet.

680

¹⁰ Way, fashion.

Him thought he rode all of the newë get,¹⁰
 Dishevele, save his cap, he rode all bare.
 Such glaring eyen had he, as an hare.

¹¹ Picture of Christ.

A vernicle¹¹ had he sewed upon his cap.
 His wallet lay before him in his lap,
 Bretful¹² of pardon come from Rome all hot.
 A voice he had, as small as hath a goat.

690

¹² Brimful.

No beard had he, ne never none should have.
As smooth it was as it were newë shave;
I trow he were a gelding or a mare.

But of his craft, from Berwick unto Ware,
Ne was there such another pardonere.

For in his mail he had a pillowbere,¹
Which, as he saidë, was our Lady's veil:

He said, he had a gobbet² of the sail
That Saint Peter had, when that he went
Upon the sea, till Jesu Christ him hent.³
He had a cross of laton⁴ full of stones,

And in a glass he haddë piggës bones.

But with these relics, whennë that he fond
A poorë parson dwelling upon lond,
Upon a day he gat him more money
Than that the parson gat in moneths tway;

And thus with feigned flattering and japes,⁵
He made the parson, and the people, his apes.

But truëly to tellen attë last,
He was in church a noble ecclesiast.
Well could he read a lesson or a story,
But alderbest⁶ he sang an offertóry:⁷
For well he wistë, when that song was sung,
He mustë preach, and well afile⁸ his tongue,
To winnë silver, as he right well could:
Therefore he sang the merrier and loud.

Now have I told you shortly in a clause,
Th' estate, th' array, the number, and eke the cause,
Why that assembled was this company
In Southwark at this gentle hostelry,
That hight the Tabard, fastë by the Bell.
But now is timë to you for to tell,
How that we baren us that ilkë night,

¹ Pillow-case.

² Piece.

700 ³ Took hold of.
⁴ Brass.

⁵ Jesta.

710 ⁶ Best of all.
⁷ Part of the Mass.
⁸ Polish.

	When we were in that hostelry alight. And after will I tell of our viâge, ¹ And all the remnant of our pilgrimage. But first I pray you of your courtesy, That ye n' arrette ² it not my villainy, ³ Though that I plainly speak in this mattére. To tellen you their wordës and their cheer; Ne though I speak their wordës properly. For this ye knownen all so well as I, Whoso shall tell a tale after a man, He must rehearse, as nigh as ever he can, Evereach word, if it be in his charge, All ⁴ speak he never so rudely and so large; Or ellës he must tellen his tale untrue, Or feignen thingës, or finden wordës new. He may not spare, although he were his brother; He must as well say one word, as another. Christ spake Himself full broad in holy writ, And well ye wot no villany is it. Eke Plato sayeth, whoso can him read, The wordës must be cousin to the deed.	724
* Al- though.	Also I pray you to forgive it me, All have I not set folk in their degree, Here in this tale, as that they shoulden stand. My wit is short, ye may well understand.	740
* Pleased.	Great cheerë made our Host us evereach one, And to the supper set he us anon: And served us with victual of the best. Strong was the wine, and well to drink us lest. ⁵ A seemly man our Hostë was with all For to have been a marshal in an hall. A largë man he was with eyen steep, ⁶ A fairer burgess is there none in Cheap: ⁷	750
* Deep- sunk. * Cheap- side.		

Bold of his speech, and wise and well ytaught, 757
 And of manhood him lacked rightē naught.
 Eke thereto was he right a merry man,
 And after supper playen he began,
 And spake of mirth amongēs other things,
 When that we hadden made our reckonings;
 And saidē thus; ‘Now, lordings, truely
 Ye be to me welcōme right heartily:
 For by my truth, if that I shall not lie,
 I saw not this year such a company
 At once in this herberow,¹ as is now.
 Fain would I do you mirth, and² I wist how.
 And of a mirth I am right now bethought,
 To do you ease, and it shall cost you nought. 770
 Ye go to Canterbury; God you speed,
 The blissful martyr quitē you your meed;
 And well I wot, as ye go by the way,
 Ye shapen³ you to talken and to play:
 For truely comfōrt ne mirth is none,
 To riden by the way dumb as the stone:
 And therefore would I maken you disport,
 As I said erst, and do you some comfōrt.
 And if you liketh all by one assent
 Now for to standen at my judgēment: 780
 And for to worken as I shall you say
 To-morrow, when ye riden on the way,
 Now by my father’s soulē that is dead,
 But ye be merry, smiteth off⁴ my head.
 Hold up your hands withouten morē speech.’

Our counsel was not longē for to seche:⁵
 Us thought it was not worth to make it wise,
 And granted him withouten more avise,
 And bade him say his verdict, as him lest. [best;
 ‘Lordings, (quod he,) now hearkeneth for the

¹ Lodging.² If.³ Prepare.⁴ Smite ye off.⁵ Seek.

	But take it not, I pray you, in disdain;	791
¹ Flat.	This is the point, to speak it plat ¹ and plain. That each of you to shorten with your way, In this viâge, ² shall tellen talës tway, To Canterbury-ward, I mean it so,	
² Journey.	And homeward he shall tellen other two, Of aventures that whilom have befall. And which of you that bearth him best of all, That is to say, that telleth in this case	
³ Cost of all.	Talës of best senténce and most solace, Shall have a supper at your aller cost ³ Here in this placë sitting by this post, When that ye comen again from Canterbury.	800
⁴ More.	And for to maken you the morë merry, I will myselven gladly with you ride, Right at mine owen cost, and be your guide. And who that will my judgëment withsay,	
	Shall pay for all we spenden by the way. And if ye vouchësafe that it be so, Tell me anon withouten wordës mo, ⁴	810
	And I will early shapen me therefore.'	
	This thing was granted, and our oathës swore With full glad heart, and prayden him also, That he would vouchësafe for to do so, And that he woulde be our governour,	
	And of our talës judge and reportour, And set a supper at a certain price; And we will ruled be at his device, In high and low: and thus by one assent,	
	We be accorded to his judgëment.	820
⁵ Fetched.	And thereupon the wine was fet ⁵ anon. We drunken, and to restë went each one, Withouten any longer tarrying. A-morrow when the day began to spring,	

Up rose our host, and was our aller cock,
And gather'd us together in a flock,
And forth we riden a little more than pace,¹
Unto the watering of Saint Thomas:^{*}

And there our host began his horse arrest,
And said; ‘Lordës, hearkeneth if you lest.
Ye weet your forword,² and I it record.
If even-song and morrow-song accord,
Let see now who shall tellë the first tale.
As ever may I drinken wine or ale,
Whoso is rebel to my judgēment,
Shall pay for all that by the way is spent.
Now draweth cut,³ or that ye farther twin.⁴
He which that hath the shortest shall begin.

‘Sir Knight, (quod he,) my master and my lord,
Now draweth cut, for that is mine accord.
Cometh near, (quod he,) my Lady Prioress,
And ye, Sir Clerk, let be your shamefastness,
Ne studieth nought: lay hand to, every man.’

Anon to drawen every wight began,
And shortly for to tellen as it was,
Were it by aventure, or sort,⁵ or cas,⁶
The sooth is this, the cut fell on the Knight,
Of which full blithe and glad was every wight;
And tell he must his talë as was reason,
By forword, and by composition,
As ye have heard; what needeth wordës mo?
And when this good man saw that it was so,
As he that wise was and obediént
To keep his forword by his free assent,
He said; ‘Sithen⁷ I shall begin this game,

825

¹ A foot-pace.

830

² Promise.

840

³ Draw lots.⁴ Proceed.

850

⁵ Lot.⁶ Chance.⁷ Since.

* ‘Saint Thomas:’ a place for watering horses, a little out of Southwark.

What? welcome be the cut a Godde's name. 856
Now let us ride, and hearkeneth what I say.'
 And with that word we riden forth our way;
 And he began with right a merry cheer
His tale anon, and said as ye shall hear. 860

THE KNIGHT'S TALE.

WHILOM,¹ as oldë stories tellen us,
 There was a duke that hightë² Theseus.
 Of Athens he was lord and governor,
 And in his timë such a conqueror
 That greater was there none under the sun.
 Full many a richë country had he won.
 What with his wisdom and his chivalry,
 He conquer'd all the regne of Feminie,³
 That whilom was ycleped Scythia;
 And wedded the fresh queen Hypolita,
 And brought her home with him to his country
 With muchel glory and great solemnity,
 And eke her youngë sister Emily,
 And thus with victory and with melody
 Let I this worthy duke to Athens ride,
 And all his host, in armës him beside.

And certes, if it n'ere⁴ too long to hear,
 I would have told you fully the mannëre,
 How wonnen⁵ was the regne of Feminie,
 By Theseus, and by his chivalry;
 And of the greatë battle for the nones
 Betwixt Athenës and the Amazones;
 And how assiegéd was Hypolita,

¹ Formerly.
² Was called.

³ Kingdom of Amazonia.

870

⁴ Were not.

⁵ Won.

880

	The fairë hardy queen of Seythia; And of the feast, that was at her wedding, And of the temple at her home-coming. But all this thing I must as now forbear. I have, God wot, a largë field to ear; And weakë be the oxen in my plough ; The remnant of my tale is long enow.	884
¹ Hinder.	I will not letten ¹ eke none of this rout. Let every fellow tell his tale about, And let see now who shall the supper win. There as I left, I will again begin.	890
² Wealth.	This Duke, of whom I madë mentioún, When he was comen almost to the town, In all his weal ² and in his mostë pride, He was 'ware, as he cast his eye aside, Where that there kneeled in the highë way A company of ladies, tway and tway,	900
	Each after other, clad in clothës black : But such a cry and such a woe they make, That in this world n'is créature living, That ever heard such another waimenting. ³	
³ Lamenting. ⁴ Cease. ⁵ Seize.	And of this cry ne would they never stenten, ⁴ Till they the reinës of his bridle henten. ⁵	
⁶ Saith.	‘ What folk be ye that at mine home-coming Perturben so my feastë with crying?’	
⁷ Injured.	Quod ⁶ Theseus; ‘ Have ye so great envy Of mine honour, that thus complain and cry? Or who hath you misboden, ⁷ or offended? Do tellë me, if that it may be amended; And why ye be thus clothed all in black?’	910
⁸ Countenance.	The oldest lady of them all then spake, When she had swooned, with a deadly chere, ⁸ That it was ruthë for to see and hear. She saidë; ‘ Lord, to whom fortune hath given	

Victory, and as a conqueror to liven, 918
 Nought grieveth us your glory and your honóur;
 But we beseech you of mercy and succour.
 Have mercy on our woe and our distress ;
 Some drop of pity, through thy gentleness,
 Upon us wretched women let now fall.
 For certes, lord, there n'is none of us all,
 That she n'hath been a duchess or a queen;
 Now be we caitives,¹ as it is well seen :
 Thanked be Fortune, and her falsë wheel,
 That none estate ensureth to be wele.² 930
 And certes, lord, to abiden your presence
 Here in this temple of the goddess Clemence
 We have been waiting all this forténighht:
 Now help us, lord, since it lieth in thy might.
 'I wretched wight, that weep and wailë thus,
 Was whilom wife to king Capaneus,
 That starf³ at Thebes, cursed be that day :
 And allë we that be in this array,
 And maken all this lamentation,
 We losten all our husbands at that town,
 While that the siegë thereabouten lay.
 And yet now the oldë Creon, well-away ! 940
 That lord is now of Thebes the city,
 Fulfilled of ire and of iniquity,
 He for despite, and for his tyranny,
 To do the dead bodies a villainy,
 Of all our lordës, which that been yslaw,⁴
 Hath all the bodies on an heap ydraw,
 And will not suffer them by none assent
 Neither to be yburied, ne ybrent,⁵
 But maketh houndës eat them in despite.' 950
 And with that word, withouten more respite
 They fallen groff,⁶ and cryen piteously ;

¹ Wretches.² Well.³ Died.⁴ Slain.⁵ Burnt.⁶ Flat on the ground.

' Have on us wretched women some mercy, 952
 And let our sorrow sinken in thine heart.'

This gentle Duke down from his courser start
 With heartë piteous, when he heard them speak.
 Him thoughtë that his heart would all to-break,
 When he saw them so piteous and so mate,¹
 That whilom weren of so great estate.

¹ Cast down.
² Took.
 And in his armës he them all up hent,²
 And them comforted in full good intent, 960
 And swore his oath, as he was truë knight,
 He wouldë do so farforthly his might
 Upon the tyrant Creon them to wreak,
 That all the people of Greecë shoulde speak,
 How Creon was of Theseus yserved,
 As he that hath his death full well deserved.

And right anon withouten more abode
 His banner he display'd, and forth he rode
 To Thebes-ward, and all his host beside:
 No ner³ Athenës n'oldë he go ne ride, 970
 Ne take his easë fully half a day,
 But onward on his way that night he lay:
 And sent anon Hypolita the queen,
 And Emily her youngë sister sheen
 Unto the town of Athens for to dwell:
 And forth he rit,⁴ there n'is no more to tell.

The red statüe of Mars with spear and targe
 So shineth in his whitë banner large,
 That all the fieldës⁵ glitteren up and down:
 And by his banner borne is his pennon 980
 Of gold full rich, in which there was ybeat⁶
 The Minotaur* which that he slew in Crete.
 Thus rit this Duke, thus rit⁷ this conquerour,
 And in his host of chivalry the flower,

* 'Minotaur:' a monster, half-man half-bull, slain by Theseus.

³ Nearer.

⁴ Rides.

⁵ Folda.

⁶ Stamped.

⁷ Rideth.

Till that he came to Thebes, and alight
Fair in a field, there as he thought to fight.
But shortly for to speaken of this thing,
With Creon, which that was of Thebes king,
He fought, and slew him manly as a knight
In plain bataille, and put his folk to flight: 990
And by assault he won the city after,
And rent adown both wall, and spar,⁹ and rafter;
And to the ladies he restored again
The bodies of their husbands that were slain,
To do the obsequies, as was then the guise.

But it were all too long for to devise
The greatē clamour, and the waimenting,²
Which that the ladies made at the brenning³
Of the bodies, and the great honour,
That Theseus the noble conqueror 1000
Doth to the ladies, when they from him went:
But shortly for to tell is mine intent.

When that this worthy Duke, this Theseus,
Hath Creon slain, and wonnen Thebes thus,
Still in the field he took all night his rest,
And did with all the country as him lest.⁴
To ransack in the tas⁵ of bodies dead,
Them for to strip of harness and of weed,
The pillers⁶ did their business and cure,
After the battle and discomfiture. 1010
And so befell, that in the tas they found,
Through girt with many a grievous bloody wound,
Two youngē knightēs ligging by and by⁷
Both in one armēs, wrought full richēly:
Of whichē two, Arcita hight that one,
And he that other hightē Palamon.
Not fully quick, ne fully dead they were,
But by their coat-armour, and by their gear,

985

¹ Wooden bar.² Lamentation.³ Burning.⁴ Pleased.⁵ Heap.⁶ Stripper.⁷ Lying side by side.

¹ Royal.

The heralds knew them well in speciál,
 As those that weren of the blood reál¹.
 Of Thebes, and of sistren two yborn.
 Out of the tas the pillers have them torn,
 And have them carried soft unto the tent
 Of Thescus, and he full soon them sent
 To Athens, for to dwellen in prisón
 Perpetual, he n'oldē no ranson.

1019

² Ridea.

And when this worthy Duke had thus ydone,
 He took his host, and home he rit² anon
 With laurel crowned as a conquerour;
 And there he liveth in joy and in honour
 Term of his life; what needeth wordës mo?
 And in a tower, in anguish and in woe,
 Dwellen this Palamon and eke Arcite,

1030

³ Free.

For evermore, there may no gold them quite.³
 Thus passeth year by year, and day by day,
 Till it fell onës in a morrow of May

⁴ Know
not.

That Emily, that fairer was to seen
 Than is the lily upon his stalkë green,
 And fresher than the May with flowerës new,
 (For with the rosë colour strove her hue;
 I n'ot⁴ which was the finer of them two)
 Ere it was day, as she was wont to do,
 She was arisen, and all ready dight,
 For May will have no sluggardy a-night.
 The season pricketh every gentle heart,
 And maketh him out of his sleep to start,
 And saith, Arise, and do thine óbservance.

1040

This maketh Emily have rémembrance
 To do honóur to May, and for to rise.
 Yclothed was she fresh for to devise;
 Her yellow hair was braided in a tress,
 Behind her back, a yardë long I guess.

1050

And in the garden at the sun uprist¹
 She walketh up and down where as her list.
 She gathereth flowerës, party white and red,
 To make a sotel² garland for her head,
 And as an angel heavenlich she sung.

1053 ¹ Rising.

The greatë tower, that was so thick and strong,
 Which of the castle was the chief dungeón,
 (Where as these knightës weren in prisón,
 Of which I toldë you, and tellen shall)
 Was even joinant to the garden wall,
 There as this Emily had her playing.

1060

Bright was the sun, and clear that morrowing,
 And Palamon, this woful prisoner,
 As was his wont, by leave of his gaoler
 Was risen, and roamed in a chamber on high,
 In which he all the noble city sigh,³
 And eke the garden, full of branches green,
 There as this fresh Emelia the sheen
 Was in her walk, and roamed up and down.

³ Saw.

This sorrowful prisoner, this Palamon
 Go'th in his chamber roaming to and fro,
 And to himself complaining of his woe:
 That he was born, full oft he said, Alas!

And so befell, by áventure or cas,⁴
 That through a window thick of many a bar
 Of iron great, and square as any spar,
 He cast his eyen upon Emelia,
 And therewithal he blent⁵ and cried, Ah!
 As though he stungen were unto the heart.

⁴ Chance.1080 ⁵ Stopped.

And with that cry Arcite anon up start,
 And saidë, 'Cousin mine, what aileth thee,
 That art so pale and deadly for to see?
 Why criedst thou? who hath thee done offence?
 For Goddë's love, take all in patience

¹ Wicked.

Our prison, for it may none other be.
 Fortune hath given us this adversity.
 Some wickë¹ aspëct or disposition
 Of Saturn, by some constellation,
 Hath given us this, although we had it sworn,
 So stood the heaven when that we were born,
 We must endure; this is the short and plain.'

1087

This Palamon answér'd, and said again:
 'Cousin, forsooth of this opiniōn
 Thou hast a vain imagination.
 This prison caused me not for to cry;
 But I was hurt right now throughout mine eye
 Into mine heart, that will my banë be.
 The fairness of a lady that I see
 Yond in the garden roaming to and fro,
 Is cause of all my crying and my woe.
 I n'ot² whe'r she be woman or goddëss.
 But Venus is it, soothly, as I guess.'

1100

And therewithal on knees adown he fill,
 And saidë: 'Venus, if it be your will
 You in this garden thus to transfigure,
 Before me sorrowful wretched créature,
 Out of this prison help that we may 'scape.
 And if so be our destiny be shape
 By eternë word to dien in prisón,
 Of our lineage havë some compassion,
 That is so low ybrought by tyranny.'

1110

And with that word Arcita 'gan espy
 Whereas this lady roamed to and fro.
 And with that sight her beauty hurt him so,
 That if that Palamon were wounded sore,
 Arcite is hurt as much as he, or more.
 And with a sigh he saidë pitcously:
 'The freshë beauty slay'th me suddenly

1120

² Know
not.

Of her that roameth in the yonder place.
And but I have her mercy and her grace,
That I may see her at the leastë way,
I n'am but dead; there n'is no more to say.'

1121

This Palamon, when he these wordës heard,
Dispiteously he looked, and answér'd:
‘Whether sayest thou this in earnest or in play?’

‘Nay,’ quod Arcite, ‘in earnest, by my fay.
God help me so, me lust full evil play.’¹

This Palamon ’gan knit his browës tway.
‘It were,’ quod he, ‘to thee no great honür
For to be false, ne for to be traitoúr
To me, that am thy cousin and thy brother
Ysworn full deep, and each of us to other,
That never for to dien in the pain,²
Till that the death departen shall us twain,
Neither of us in love to hinder other,
Ne in none other case, my levë³ brother;
But that thou shouldest truly further me
In every case, as I should further thee.
This was thine oath, and mine also certáin;
I wot it well, thou dar'st it not withsayn.
Thus art thou of my counsel out of doubt.
And now thou wouldest falsely be about
To love my lady, whom I love and serve,
And ever shall, till that mine heartë sterve.⁴

1130

¹ Ill in-
clined to
play.² Though
death
were the
penalty.³ Dear.

1140

‘Now certes, false Arcite, thou shalt not so.
I loved her first, and toldë thee my woe
As to my counsel, and my brother sworn
To further me, as I have told beforne.
For which thou art ybounden as a knight
To helpen me, if it lie in thy might,
Or ellës art thou false, I dare well sayn.’
This Arcita full proudly spake again:

⁴ Die.

1150

'Thou shalt,' quod he, 'be rather false than I, 1155
 And thou art false, I tell thee utterly ;
 For *par amour* I loved her first ere thou.
 What wilt thou sayn ? thou wisted not right now
 Whether she were a woman or a goddëss.

Thine is affection of holiness, 1160
 And mine is love, as to a créature :
 For which I toldë thee mine aventure
 As to my cousin, and my brother sworn.

¹ Suppose.

² Wottest.

³ Head.

'I posë,¹ that thou lovedest her beforne :
 Wost² thou not well the oldë clerkës saw,
 That who shall give a lover any law ?
 Love is a greater lawë, by my pan,³
 Than may be given of any earthly man :
 And therefore positive law, and such decrce
 Is broken all day for love in each degree. 1170
 A man must needës love maugre his head.
 He may not flee it, though he should be dead,
 All be she maid, or widow, or ellës wife.

'And eke it is not likely all thy life
 To standen in her grace, no more shall I :
 For well thou wost thyself verily,
 That thou and I be damned to prisón
 Perpetual, us gaineth no ranson.

'We strive, as did the houndës for the bone, 1179
 They fought all day, and yet their part was none.
 There came a kite, while that they were so wroth,
 And bare away the bone betwixt them both.
 And therefore at the kingës court, my brother,
 Each man for himself, there is none other.
 Love if thee list; for I love and aye shall:
 And soothly, levë⁴ brother, this is all.
 Here in this prison musten we endure,
 And evereach of us take his aventure.'

⁴ Dear.

Great was the strife, and long betwixt them tway,
If that I haddē leisure for to say:

1190

But to th' effect. It happed on a day,
(To tell it you as shortly as I may)

A worthy duke that hightē Perithous,
That fellow was to this duke Theseus

Since thilkē¹ day that they were children lite,²

¹ That.

Was come to Athens, his fellow to visite,

² Little.

And for to play, as he was wont to do,

For in this world he loved no man so:

And he loved him as tenderly again.

So well they loved, as oldē bookēs sayn,

1200

That when that one was dead, soothly to tell,

His fellow went and sought him down in hell:

But of that story list me not to write.

Duke Perithous loved well Arcite,

And had him known at Thebes year by year:

And finally at réquest and prayére

Of Perithous, withouten any ranson

Duke Theseus him let out of prison,

Freely to go, where that him list over all,

In such a guise, as I you tellen shall.

1210

This was the forword,³ plainly for to indite,

³ Promise.

Betwixen Theseus and him Arcite:

That if so were, that Arcite were yfound

Ever in his life, by day or night, one stound⁴

⁴ Moment.

In any country of this Theseus,

And he were caught, it was accorded thus,

That with a sword he shouldē lose his head;

There was none other remedy ne rede.⁵

⁵ Counsel.

But taketh his leave, and homeward he him sped;

Let him beware, his neckē lieth to wed.⁶

1220

⁶ Pledge.

How great a sorrow suffereth now Arcite!

The death he feeleth through his heartē smite;

He weepeth, waileth, crieth piteously; 1223
 To slay himself he waiteth privily.
 He said; ‘Alas the day that I was born!
¹ Now is my prison worsē than beforne:
 Now is me shape² eternally to dwell
 Not only in purgatory, but in hell.
 Alas! that ever I knew Perithous.
 For ellēs had I dwelt with Theseus 1230
 Yfettered in his prison evermo.
 Then had I been in bliss, and not in woe.
 Only the sight of her, whom that I serve,
 Though that I never her graciē may deserve,
 Would have sufficed right enough for me.
 ‘O dearē cousin Palamon,’ quod he,
 ‘Thine is the victory of this aventure.
 Full blissful in prison mayst thou endure:
 In prison? certes nay, but in paradise.
 Well hath fortune yturned thee the dice, 1240
 That hast the sight of her, and I th’ absēnce.
 For possible is, since thou hast her presénce,
 And art a knight, a worthy and an able,
 That by some cas,³ since fortune is changeable,
 Thou mayst to thy desire sometime attain.
 But I that am exiled, and barrén
 Of allē grace, and in so great despair,
 That there n’is earthē, water, fire, ne air,
 Ne créature, that of them maked is,
 That may me heal, or do comfort in this, 1250
 Well ought I sterve⁴ in wanhope⁵ and distress.
 Farewell my life, my lust,⁶ and my gladness.
 ‘Alas, why plainen men so in commûne
 Of purveyance of God, or of Fortûne,
 That giveth them full oft in many a guise
 Well better than they can themself devise!

¹ Before.² Shapen, fixed.³ Chance.⁴ Die.
⁵ Despair.
⁶ Pleasure.

Some man desireth for to have richéss,
That cause is of his murder or great sicknés.
And some man would out of his prison fain,
That in his house is of his meinie¹ slain.
Infinite harmés be in this mattére.

1257

¹ Menials.

We wot not what thing that we prayen here.
We faren as he that drunk is as a mouse.
A drunken man wot well he hath an house,
But he ne wot which is the right way thider,
And to a drunken man the way is slider.²
And certes in this world so faren we.

² Slippery.

' We seeken fast after felicity,
But we go wrong full often truëly.
Thus we may sayen all, and namely I,
That ween'd, and had a great opinión,
That if I might escapan from prisón
Then had I been in joy and perfect heal,
There now I am exiled from my weal.
Since that I may not see you, Emily,
I n'am but dead; there n'is no remedy.'

1270

Upon that other sidë Palamon,
When that he wist Arcita was agone,
Such sorrow he maketh, that the greatë tower
Resounded of his yelling and clamour.
The purë fetters³ on his shinnés great
Were of his bitter saltë tearës wet.

1280

³ The very fetters.

' Alas!' quod he, ' Arcita, cousin mine,
Of all our strife, God wot, the fruit is thine.
Thou walkest now in Thebes at thy large,
And of my woe thou givest little charge.
Thou mayst, sith thou hast wisdom and manhead,
Assemblen all the folk of our kindréd,
And make a war so sharp on this country,
That by some áventure, or some treaty,

1290

	Thou mayst have her to lady and to wife, For whom that I must needēs lose my life. For as by way of possibility, Sith thou art at thy large of prison free, And art a lord, great is thine avantage, More than is mine, that sterve ¹ here in a cage. For I may weep and wail, while that I live, With all the woe that prison may me give, And eke with pain that love me giveth also, That doubleth all my torment and my woe.'	1291
¹ Perish.	Therewith the fire of jealousy upstart Within his breast, and hent ² him by the heart So woodly, ³ that he like was to behold The box-tree, or the ashes dead and cold. Then said he; 'O cruel goddess, that govern This world with binding of your word etern, And writen in the table of adamant	1300
² Seized.	Your parlement ⁴ and your eternē grant, What is mankind more unto you yhold Than is the sheep, that rouketh ⁵ in the fold!	1310
³ Madly.	For slain is man, right as another beast, And dwelleth eke in prison, and arrest, And hath sicknēss, and great adversity, And oftentimes guiltēless pardie. ⁶	
⁴ Consulta- tion.	' What governance is in this prescience, That guiltēless tormenteth innocence? And yet increaseth this all my penance, That man is bounden to his observance For Goddē's sake to letten of his will, There as a beast may all his lust ⁷ fulfil	
⁵ Huddle together.	And when a beast is dead, he hath no pain; But man after his death must weep and plain, Though in this world he havē care and woe: Withouten doubt it mayē standen so.	1320
⁶ In truth.		
⁷ Pleasure.		

'The answer of this let I to divinës,
But well I wot, that in this world great pine is.
Alas! I see a serpent or a thief,
That many a trüē man hath done mischief,
Gone at his large, and where him list may turn.

1325

But I must be in prison through Saturn,
And eke through Juno, jealous and eke wood,¹
That hath well nigh destroyed all the blood
Of Thebes, with his wastë wallës wide.
And Venus slay'th me on that other side
For jealousy, and fear of him Arcite.'

1330

¹ Mad.

Now will I stent² of Palamon a lite,³
And letten him in his prisón still dwell,
And of Arcita forth I will you tell.

² Pause.³ Little.

The summer passeth, and the nightës long
Increasen double-wise the painës strong
Both of the lover, and of the prisoner.
I n'ot⁴ which hath the wofuller mistére.⁵
For shortly for to say, this Palamon
Perpetually is damned to prisón,
In chainës and in fetters to be dead;
And Arcite is exiled on his head
For evermore as out of that country,
Ne never more he shall his lady see.

1340

⁴ Know not.⁵ Condition.

You lovers ask I now this question,
Who hath the worse, Arcite or Palamon?
That one may see his lady day by day,
But in prison must he dwellen alway.
That other where him list may ride or go,
But see his lady shall he never mo.
Now deemeth as you listë, ye that can,
For I will tell you forth as I began.

1350

When that Arcite to Thebes comen was,
Full oft a day he swelt⁶ and said, Alas!

⁶ Fainted.

For see his lady shall he never mo.
And shortly to concluden all his woe,
So muchel sorrow had never creatúre,
That is or shall be, while the world may dure.
His sleep, his meat, his drink is him beraft,

1359

¹ Waxed.

That lean he wex,¹ and dry as is a shaft.
His eyen hollow, and grisly to behold,
His huë falow,² and pale as ashes cold,
And solitary he was, and ever alone,
And wailing all the night, making his moan.

² Yellow.

And if he heardē song or instrument,
Then would he weep, he mightē not be stent.³
So feeble were his spirits, and so low,
And changed so, that no man couldē know
His speechē ne his voice, though men it heard.

³ Stopped.

Then would he weep, he mightē not be stent.³
So feeble were his spirits, and so low,
And changed so, that no man couldē know
His speechē ne his voice, though men it heard.

1370

⁴ Form, or fashion.

And in his gear,⁴ for all the world he far'd
Not only like the lovers' malady
Of Ereos, but rather ylike máný,
Engendred of húmours meláncholic,
Before his head in his cell fántastic.

And shortly turned was all up so down
Both habit and eke dispositioún

1380

⁵ Dominus, or lord.

Of him, this woful lover Dan⁵ Arcite,
What should I all day of his woe indite?

⁶ Rod.

When he endured had a year or two
This cruel torment, and this pain and woe,
At Thebes, in his country, as I said,
Upon a night in sleep as he him laid,
Him thought how that the winged god Mercurý

Before him stood, and bade him to be merry.
His sleepy yard⁶ in hand he bare upright;

⁷ Notice.

An hat he weared upon his hairës bright.
Arrayed was this god (as he took keep⁷)

1390

As he was when that Argus* took his sleep; 1392
 And said him thus: 'To Athens shalt thou wend;
 There is thee shapen of thy woe an end.'

And with that word Arcite awoke and start.

'Now truely how sore that ever me smart,'
 Quod he, 'to Athens right now will I fare.
 Ne for no dread of death shall I not spare
 To see my lady, that I love and serve;
 In her presence I reckë not to sterve.'¹

1400 ¹ Die.

And with that word he caught a great mirrour,
 And saw that changed was all his colouur,
 And saw his visage all in another kind.
 And right anon it ran him in his mind,
 That sith his face was so disfigured
 Of malady the which he had endured,
 He mightë well, if that he bare him low,
 Live in Athenës evermore unknow,
 And see his lady well nigh day by day.

And right anon he changed his array,
 And clad him as a poorë labourer.

And all alone, save only a squier,
 That knew his privity² and all his cas,³
 Which was disguised poorly as he was,
 To Athens is he gone the nextë way.

And to the court he went upon a day,
 And at the gate he proffered his service,
 To drudge and draw, what so men would devise.

And shortly of this matter for to sayn,⁴

He fell in office with a chamberlain,
 The which that dwelling was with Emily.
 For he was wise, and couldë soon espy
 Of every servant which that served her.

* Private
history.
^ Fortune.

* Say.

* 'Argus:' employed by Juno to watch Io with his hundred eyes, till set to sleep by the flute of Mercury, who then cut off his head.

¹ Purpose.

Well could he hewen wood, and water bear,
 For he was young and mighty for the nones,¹
 And thereto he was strong and big of bones
 To do that any wight can him devise.

1424

A year or two he was in this service,
 Page of the chamber of Emily the bright;
 And Philostrate he saidē that he hight.
 But half so well beloved a man as he,
 Ne was there never in court of his degree.
 He was so gentle of conditioún,
 That throughout all the court was his renown.
 They saiden that it were a charity
 That Theseus would enhancen his degree,
 And putten him in worshipful service,
 There as he might his virtues exercise.

1430

And thus within a while his name is sprung
 Both of his deedēs, and of his good tongue,
 That Theseus hath taken him so near
 That of his chamber he made him a squiér,
 And gave him gold to máintain his degree;
 And eke men brought him out of his country
 From year to year full privily his rent.

1440

² Wisely.

But honestly and slily² he it spent,
 That no man wonder'd how that he it had.
 And three year in this wise his life he lad,
 And bare him so in peace and eke in werre,

³ Dearer.

There n'as no man that Theseus hath derre.³

1450

⁴ Little.

And in this blissē let I now Arcite,

And speak I will of Palamon a lite.⁴

In darkness and horrible and strong prisón
 This seven year hath sitten Palamon,
 Forpined,⁵ what for love and for distress.
 Who feeleth double sorrow and heaviness
 But Palamon? that love distracteth so,

⁶ Wasted.

That wood¹ out of his wit he go'th for woe,
And eke thereto he is a prisonere
Perpetual, not only for a year.

1458

¹ Mad.

Who couldē rhyme in English properly
His martyrdom ? forsooth it am not I,
Therefore I pass as lightly as I may.
It fell that in the seventh year, in May
The thridde night, (as oldē bookēs sayn,
That all this story tellen morē plain)
Were it by aventure or destiny,

(As, when a thing is shapen, it shall be,)

That soon after the midnight, Palamon
By helping of a friend brake his prison,
And fleeth the city fast as he may go,
For he had given drink his gaoler so
Of a clary,² made of a certain wine,
With narcotics and opie of Thebes fine,
That all the night, though that men would him shake,
The gaoler slept, he mightē not awake;
And thus he fleeth as fast as ever he may.

1470

² Spiced wine.

The night was short, and fastē by the day,
That needēs cast he must³ himselven hide.
And to a grovē fastē there beside
With dreadful foot then stalketh Palamon.
For shortly this was his opiniōn,
That in that grove he would him hide all day,
And in the night then would he take his way
To Thēbes-ward, his friendēs for to pray
On Thescus to helpen him warray.⁴
And shortly, either he would lose his life,
Or winnen Emily unto his wife.
This is the effect, and his intentē plain.

1480

³ Must needs cast or contrive.

Now will I turnen to Arcite again,
That little wist how nighē was his care,

1490

⁴ Make war.

Till that fortúne had brought him in the snare. 1492

The busy lark, the messenger of day,

Saluteth in her song the morrow gray;

And fiery Phœbus riseth up so bright,

That all the orient laugheth of the sight,

And with his streamës drieth in the greves¹

The silver droppës, hanging on the leaves,

And Arcite, that is in the court real²

With Theseus the squiér principal,

1500

Is risen, and looketh on the merry day.

And for to do his obseruance to May,

Rememb'ring on the point³ of his desire,

He on his courser, starting as the fire,

Is ridden to the fieldës him to play,

Out of the court, were it a mile or tway.

And to the grove of which that I you told,

By aventure his way he 'gan to hold,

To maken him a garland of the greves,

Were it of woodbind or of hawthorn leaves,

1510

And loud he sang against the sunnë shene.⁴

'O May, with all thy flowerës and thy green,

Right welcome be thou, fairë, freshë May,

I hope that I some green here getten may.'

And from his courser, with a lusty heart

Into the grove full hastily he start,

And in a path he roamed up and down,

There as by aventure this Palamon .

Was in a bush, that no man might him see,

For sore afeared of his death was he.

1520

Nothing ne knew he that it was Arcite;

God wot he would have trowed⁵ it full lite.⁶

But sooth is said, gone sithen⁷ are many years,

That field hath eyen, and the wood hath ears.

It is full fair a man to bear him even,

¹ Believed.

² Little.

³ Since.

For all day meeten men at unset steven.¹
 Full little wot Arcite of his fellaw,
 That was so nigh to hearken of his saw,²
 For in the bush he sitteth now full still.

1526 ¹ Without
 appointment.

² Speech.

When that Arcite had roamed all his fill,
 And sungen all the roundel lustily,
 Into a study he fell suddenly,
 As do those lovers in their quainte gears,³
 Now in the crop,⁴ and now down in the breres,⁵
 Now up, now down, as bucket in a well.
 Right as the Friday, soothly for to tell,
 Now shineth it, and now it raineth fast,
 Right so can gery⁶ Venus overcast
 The heartes of her folk, right as her day
 Is gerfull,⁷ right so changeth she array.
 Seld' is the Friday all the week ylike.

1530

³ Strange
fashions.
⁴ Top.
⁵ Briars.

⁶ Change-
ful.

⁷ Change-
able.

⁸ Sigh.

When Arcite had ysung, he 'gan to sike,⁸
 And set him down withouten any more:
 'Alas!' (quod he) 'the day that I was bore!
 How longe, Juno, through thy cruelty
 Wilt thou warrayen Thebes the city?
 Alas! ybrought is to confusion
 The blood real⁹ of Cadme and Amphion:
 Of Cadmus, which that was the firste man,
 That Thebes built, or first the town began,
 And of the city first was crowned king,
 Of his lineage am I, and his offspring
 By very line, as of the stock real;
 And now I am so caitiff¹⁰ and so thrall,¹¹
 That he that is my mortal enemy,
 I serve him as his squier poorely.
 And yet doth Juno me well morē shame,
 For I dare not beknow mine owen name,
 But there as I was wont to hight Arcite,

⁹ Royal.

1540

¹⁰ Wretch-
ed.

¹¹ Enslav-
ed.

	Now hight I Philostrat, not worth a mite. Alas! thou fell Mars, alas! thou Juno, Thus hath your ire our lineage all fordo, ¹ Save only me, and wretched Palamon, That Theseus martyreth in prisón. And over all this, to slay me utterly, Love hath his fiery dart so brenningly ² Ysticked through my truë careful hert, That shapen was my death erst ³ than my shert. ⁴	1560
¹ Undone.	Ye slay me with your eyen, Emily; Ye be the causē wherefore that I die. Of all the remnant of mine other care Ne set I not the mountance ⁵ of a tare, So that I could do ought to your pleasance.'	1570
² Burning-ly.	And with that word he fell down in a trance A longē time; and afterward up start This Palamon, that thought throughout his heart He felt a coldē sword suddenly glide: For ire he quoke, no longer would he hide.	
³ Before. ⁴ Shirt.	And when that he had heard Arcite's tale, As he were wood, ⁶ with facē dead and pale, He start him up out of the bushes thick, And saidē: 'False Arcite, false traitor wicke, ⁷ Now art thou hent, ⁸ that lov'st my lady so,	1580
⁵ Amount.	For whom that I have all this pain and woe, And art my blood, and to my counsel sworn, As I full oft have told thee herebeforn, And hast bejaped ⁹ here Duke Theseus, And falsely changed hast thy namē thus;	
⁶ Mad.	I will be dead, or ellēs thou shalt die. Thou shalt not love my lady Emily, But I will love her only and no mo; For I am Palamon thy mortal foe.	1590
⁷ Weak.	And though that I no weapon have in this place,	
⁸ Caught.		
⁹ Deceived.		

But out of prison am astart ¹ by grace, I dreadë nought, that either thou shalt die, Or thou ne shalt not loven Emily. Choose which thou wilt, for thou shalt not astart.'	1594	¹ Escaped.
This Arcite then, with full dispiteous heart, When he him knew, and had his talë heard, As fierce as a lion, pulled out a swerd, And saidë thus; 'By God that sitt' th above, N'ere ² it that thou art sick, and wood ³ for love, And eke that thou no weapon hast in this place, Thou shouldest never out of this grovë pace, That thou ne shouldest dien of mine hand. For I defy the surety and the band, Which that thou sayst that I have made to thee. What? very fool, think well that love is free, And I will love her maugre ⁴ all thy might. But, for thou art a worthy gentle knight, And wilnest ⁵ to darraine ⁶ her by bataille, Have here my truth, to-morrow I will not fail, Withouten weeting ⁷ of any other wight, That here I will be founden as a knight, And bringen harness right enough for thee; And choose the best, and leave the worst for me. And meat and drinkë this night will I bring Enough for thee, and clothes for thy bedding. And if so be that thou my lady win, And slay me in this wood, there I am in,	1600	² Were it ³ not. ⁴ Mad.
Thou mayst well have thy lady as for me.'	1610	⁵ In spite of. ⁶ Deserv- est. ⁷ Contest. ⁷ Know- ledge.
This Palamon answérd, 'I grant it thee.' And thus they been departed till a-morrow, When each of them hath laid his faith to borrow. ⁸ O Cupid, out of allë charity! O regne, ⁹ that wilt no fellow have with thee: Full sooth is said, that lovë ne lordship	1620	⁸ Pledge. ⁹ Domin- ion.

¹ With his good-will.	Will not, his thankës, ¹ have no fellowship. Well finden that Arcite and Palamon.	1628
² Prepared.	Arcite is ridden anon unto the town, And on the morrow, or it were daylight, Full privily two harness hath he dight, ² Both suffisant and meetë to darraine ³	
³ Contest.	The battle in the field betwixt them twain. And on his horse, alone as he was borne, He carrieth all this harness him beforne; And in the grove, at time and place yset, This Arcite and this Palamon be met.	
⁴ King-dom.	Then changen 'gan the colour of their face; Right as the hunter in the regne ⁴ of Thrace That standeth at a gappë with a spear, When hunted is the lion or the bear,	1640
⁵ Groves.	And hearth him come rushing in the greves, ⁵ And breaking both the boughës and the leaves, And thinketh, 'Here cometh my mortal enemy, Withouten fail, he must be dead or I;	
	For either I must slay him at the gap; Or he must slay me, if that me mishap.' So fareden they, in changing of their hue, As far as either of them other knew,	
⁶ Was not.	There n'as ⁶ no good day, ne no saluting, But straight withouten wordës rehearsing, Evereach of them holp to armen other, As friendly, as he were his owen brother.	1650
⁷ Thrust.	And after that, with sharpe spearës strong They foineden ⁷ each at other wonder long. Thou mighkest weenen, ⁸ that this Palamon	
⁸ Think.	In his fighting were as a wood ⁹ lion, And as a cruel tiger was Arcite: As wildë boars 'gan they together smite,	
⁹ Mad.	That frothen white as foam for irë wood.	1660

Up to the ancle fought they in their blood.
And in this wise I let them fighting dwell,
And forth I will of Theseus you tell.

1662

The Destiny, minister-general,
That executeth in the world o'er all
The púrveyance,¹ that God hath seen beforne;
So strong it is, that though the world had sworne
The contrary of a thing by yea or nay,
Yet sometime it shall fallen on a day
That falleth not eftë² in a thousand year.

1670

For certainly our appetites here,
Be it of war, or peace, or hate, or love,
All is this ruled by the sight³ above.
This mean I now by mighty Theseus,
That for to hunten is so desirous,
And namely at the greatë hart in May,
That in his bed there daweth him no day,
That he n'is clad, and ready for to ride
With hunt and horn, and houndës him beside.
For in his hunting hath he such delight,
That it is all his joy and appetite
To be himself the greatë hartës bane,
For after Mars he serveth now Diane.

1680

Clear was the day, as I have told ere this,
And Theseus, with allë joy and bliss,
With his Hypolita, the fairë queen,
And Emily, yclothed all in green,
On hunting be they ridden réally.⁴
And to the grove, that stood there fastë by,
In which there was an hart as men him told,
Duke Theseus the straightë way hath hold,
And to the launde⁵ he rideth him full right,
There was the hart ywont to have his flight,
And over a brook, and so forth on his way.

¹ Fore-sight.² Again.³ Eye, or Power.⁴ Royally.⁵ Plain.

¹ Pleased.

This Duke will have a course at him or tway
 With houndës, such as him lust¹ to command.
 And when this Duke was comen to the land,
 Under the sun he looked, and anon
 He was 'ware of Arcitë and Palamon,

1698

² Furiously.

That foughten breme,² as it were bullës two.
 The brightë swordës wenten to and fro
 So hideously, that with the leastë stroke
 It seemed that it woulde fell an oak,
 But what they weren, nothing he ne wote.
 This Duke his courser with his spurrës smote,
 And at a start he was betwixt them two,
 And pulled out a sword and cried, ' Ho!
 No more, up' pain of losing of your head.
 By mighty Mars, he shall anon be dead,

1700

That smiteth any stroke, that I may see.
 But telleth me what mister³ men ye be,
 That be so hardy for to fighten here
 Withouten any judge or other officer,
 As though it were in listës really.⁴

1710

⁵ Kind of.

This Palamon answered hastily,
 And saidë: 'Sir, what needeth wordës mo?
 We have the death deserved bothë two.
 Two woful wretches be we, two caitives,
 That be accumbred of our owen lives,
 And as thou art a rightful lord and judge
 Ne give us neither mercy ne refuge.
 And slay me first, for saintë charity,
 But slay my fellow eke as well as me.

1720

⁶ Little.

Or slay him first; for, though thou know it lite,⁵
 This is thy mortal foe, this is Arcite,
 That from thy land is banish'd on his head,
 For which he hath deserved to be dead.
 For this is he that came unto thy gate

And saidē, that he hightē Philostrate.

1730

¹ Mocked.

Thus hath he japed¹ thee full many a year,
And thou hast maked him thy chief squiér
And this is he, that loveth Emily.

'For sith the day is come that I shall die
I makē plainly my confession,
That I am thilkē² woful Palamon,
That hath thy prison broken wilfully.
I am thy mortal foe, and it am I
That loveth so hot Emily the bright,
That I would dien present in her sight.
Therefore I axē death and my jewise.³
But slay my fellow in the samē wise,
For both we have deserved to be slain.'

1740

² That.³ Doom.

This worthy Duke answérd anon again,
And said, 'This is a short conclusiōn.
Your owen mouth, by your confessiōn
Hath damned you, and I will it record;
It needeth not to pain you with the cord;
Ye shall be dead, by mighty Mars the Red.'

The queen anon for very womanhead
'Gan for to weep, and so did Emily,
And all the ladies in the company.
Great pity was it, as it thought them all,
That ever such a chancē should befall,
For gentlemen they were of great estate,
And nothing but for love was this debate;
And saw their bloody woundēs wide and sore;
And allē crierden bothē less and more,
'Have mercy, Lord, upon us women all.'
And on their barē knees adown they fall,
And would have kiss'd his feet there as he stood,
Till at the last, aslaked⁴ was his mood,
(For pity runneth soon in gentle heart;)

1750

⁴Appeas-ed.

	And though he first for irë quoke and start, He hath considered shortly in a clause The trespass of them both, and eke the cause: And although that his ire their guilt accused, Yet in his reason he them both excused; As thus ; he thoughtē well that every man Will help himself in love if that he can, And eke deliver himself out of prison. And eke his heartē had compassion Of women, for they wepten ever-in-on: ¹ And in his gentle heart he thought anon, And soft unto himself he sayed : ‘Fie Upon a lord that will have no mercy, But be a lion both in word and deed, To them that be in répentance and dread,	1764
* Continually.	As well as to a proud dispitēous ² man, That will maintainen that he first began. That lord hath little of discretiōn, That in such case can no divisiōn: ³ But weigheth pride and humbless after one.’	1770
* Unpitying.	And shortly, when his ire is thus agone, He 'gan to looken up with eyen light, And spake these samē wordēs all on height. ‘The god of love, ah! <i>benedicite</i> , ⁴	1780
* Make no distinction.	How mighty and how great a lord is he ! Against his might there gainen none obstacles, He may be clep'd a god for his miracles. For he can maken at his owen guise Of everich heart, as that him list devise.	1780
* Blessings on him.	‘Lo here this Arcite, and this Palamon, That quately ⁵ weren out of my prisón, And might have lived in Thebes really, ⁶ And weeten ⁷ I am their mortal enemy, And that their death li'th in my might also,	
* Freely.		
* Royally.		
? Know.		

And yet hath love, maugre their eyen two,
Ybrought them hither bothë for to die.
Now looketh, is not this an high folly ?
Who mayë be a fool, but if he love ?
Behold for Godde's sake that sitteth above,
See how they bleed! be they not well array'd?
Thus hath their lord, the god of love, them paid
Their wages, and their fees for their service.
And yet they weenen for to be full wise,
That serven love, for ought that may befall.
And yet is this the bestë game of all,
That she, for whom they have this jollity,
Con¹ them therefore as muchel thank as me. 1810
She wot no more of all this hotë fare
By God, than wot a cuckoo or an hare.
But all must be assayed hot or cold;
A man must be a fool either young or old;
I wot it by myself full yore² agone:
For in my time a servant was I one.
And therefore sith I know of lovë's pain,
And wot how sore it can a man destrain,³
As he that oft hath been caught in his las,⁴
I you forgive all wholly this trespass,
At réquest of the queen that kneeleth here,
And eke of Emily, my sister dear.
And ye shall both anon unto me swear,
That never more ye shall my country dere,⁵
Ne maken war upon me night nor day,
But be my friends in allë that ye may.
I you forgive this trespass every deal.'

And they him sware his asking fair and well,
And him of lordship and of mercy pray'd,
And he them granted grace, and thus he said: 1830
‘To speak of real⁶ lineage and richess,

¹ Is as
much
obliged.

² Long.

³ Vex.

⁴ Noose.

⁵ Harm.

⁶ Royal.

Though that she were a queen or a princess,
 Each of you both is worthy doubtëless
 To wedden when time is, but natheless
 I speak as for my sister Emily,

1832

For whom ye have this strife and jealousy,
 Ye wot yourself, she may not wedden two
 At onës, though ye fighten evermo :

But one of you, all be him loth or lief,¹

He must go pipen in an ivy leaf:²

1840

This is to say, she may not have you both,
 All be ye never so jealous, ne so wroth.

And forthy³ I you put in this degree,
 That each of you shall have his destiny,

As him is shape,⁴ and heark'neth⁵ in what wise;
 Lo hear your end of that I shall devise.

‘ My will is this for plat⁶ conclusion

Withouten any replication,

If that you liketh, take it for the best,

That everich of you shall go where him lest,⁷

1850

Freely withouten ransom or dangere;

And this day fifty weekës, farre ne nere,⁸

Everich of you shall bring an hundred knights,

Armed for listës up at allë rights

All ready to darrein⁹ here by bataille.

And this behete¹⁰ I you withouten fail

Upon my truth, and as I am a knight,

That whether of you bothë hath that might,

That is to say, that whether he or thou

May with his hundred, as I spake of now,

1860

Slay his contrary, or out of listës drive,

Him shall I given Emily to wife,

To whom that fortune giveth so fair a grace.

‘ The listës shall I maken in this place,

And God so wisely¹¹ on my soulë rue,

¹¹ Certainly.

As I shall even judge be, and true.

1866

Ye shall none other endë with me maken
That one of you ne shall be dead or taken.
And if you thinketh this is well ysaid,
Saith your advice, and holdeth you apaid.¹
This is your end, and your conclusiōn.'

1870

¹ Satisfied.

Who looketh lightly now but Palamon?
Who springeth up for joyë but Arcite?
Who could it tell, or who could it indite,
The joyë that is maked in the place
When Theseus hath done so fair a grace?
But down on knees went every manner² wight,
And thanked him with all their heartës' might,
And namely³ these Thebans often sith.⁴

1879

² Kind of.³ Especially.⁴ Since.

And thus with good hope and with heartë blith
They taken their leave, and homeward 'gan they ride
To Thebes, with his oldë wallës wide.

I trow men wouldë deem it negligence,
If I forget to tellen the dispence⁵
Of Theseus, that go'th so busily
To maken up the listës really,⁶
That such a noble theatre as it was,
I dare well say, in all this world there n'as.⁷
The circuit a milë was about,
Walled of stone, and ditched all without.

1890

⁵ Expense.⁶ Royally.⁷ Was not.

Round was the shape, in manner⁸ of a compass
Full of degrees, the height of sixty pas,⁹
That when a man was set on one degree
He letted¹⁰ not his fellow for to see.
Eastward there stood a gate of marble white,
Westward right such another in th' opposite.
And shortly to concluden, such a place
Was never in earthë, in so little a space,
For in the land there n'as no craftës-man,

⁸ Form.⁹ Pasca.¹⁰ Hindered.

¹ Arithme-tic.	That geometry, or arsmetrikë ¹ can, Ne portayour, ne carver of images, That Theseus ne gave him meat and wages The theatre for to maken and devise.	1900
² Caused.	And for to do his rite and sacrifice, He eastward hath upon the gate above, In worship of Venus, goddess of love, Done ² make an altar and an oratory;	
³ Large quantity.	And westward, in the mind and in memory Of Mars he maked hath right such another, That costë largely of gold a fother. ³ And northward, in a turret on the wall, Of alabaster white and red coral An oratory richë for to see, In worship of Diane of chastity, Hath Theseus done wrought in noble wise.	1910
⁴ Sighs.	But yet had I forgotten to devise The noble carving, and the portraitures, The shape, the countenance of the figures That weren in these oratories three.	
⁵ Lamenta-tions.	First in the temple of Venus mayst thou see Wrought on the wall, full piteous to behold, The broken sleepës, and the sikës ⁴ cold, The sacred tearës, and the waimentings, ⁵ The fiery strokës of the desirings,	1920
⁶ The flower turnsol.	That Lovë's servants in this life enduren; The oathës, that their covenants assuren. Pleasance and Hope, Desire, Foolhardiness, Beauty and Youth, Baudry and Richess, Charmës and Force, Leasings and Flattery, Dispencë, Business, and Jealousy, That weared of yellow goldës ⁶ a garland, And had a cuckoo sitting on her hand, Feastës, instruments, and carolës and dances,	1930

Lust and array, and all the circumstānces
Of Love, which that I reckon and reckon
shall,

1934

By order weren painted on the wall,
And more than I can make of mentiōn.
For soothly all the mount of Citheron,
There Venus hath her principal dwelling,
Was showed on the wall in pourtraying,
With all the garden, and the lustiness.
Nought was forgotten the porter Idleness,
Ne Narcissus the fair of yore agone,
Ne yet the folly of King Solomon,
Ne yet the greatē strength of Hercules,
Th' enchantment of Medea and Circes,
Ne of Turnus the hardy fierce courāge,
The richē Croesus caitif¹ in servāge.²
Thus may ye see, that wisdom nor richess,
Beauty nor sleightē, strength nor hardness,
Ne may with Venus holden champartie,³
For as her listē the world may she gie.⁴
Lo, all these folk so caught were in her las⁵
Till they for woe full often said, Alas!
Sufficeth here ensamples one or two,
And yet I couldē reckon a thousand mo.

1940

The statue of Venus glorious for to see
Was naked floating in the largē sea,
And from the navel down all covered was
With wavēs green, and bright as any glass,
A citole⁶ in her right hand haddē she,
And on her head, full seemly for to see,
A rosē garland fresh, and well smelling,
Above her head her dovēs flickering.
Before her stood her sonē Cupido,
Upon his shoulders wingēs had he two;

¹ Wretch-ed.
² Slavery.

³ Share of power.
⁴ Guide.
⁵ Snare.

1950

1960

⁶ Musical instru-
ment.

	And blind he was, as it is often seen; A bow he bare and arrows bright and keen. Why should I not as well eke tell you all The portraiture, that was upon the wall Within the temple of mighty Mars the Rede? All painted was the wall in length and brede Like to the estres ¹ of the grisly place, That hightë the great temple of Mars in Thrace, In thilkë ² cold and frosty régión, There as Mars hath his sovereign mansión. First on the wall was painted a forést, In which there wonneth ³ neither man nor best, With knotty gnarry ⁴ barren treës old Of stubbës sharp and hideous to behold;	1967
¹ Interior.		
² That.		
³ Dwells.		
⁴ Gnarled.		
⁵ Groaning noise.		
⁶ Slope.		
⁷ Burnish-ed.		
⁸ Furious rush.		
⁹ Across and length-ways.		
¹⁰ Of the circumference of a tun.		
¹¹ Burning coal.		
	In which there ran a rumble and a sough, ⁵ As though a storm should bursten every bough: And downward from an hill under a bent, ⁶ There stood the temple of Mars Armipotent, Wrought all of burned ⁷ steel, of which th' entry Was long and strait, and ghastly for to see. And thereout came a rage and such a vise, ⁸ That it made all the gatës for to rise. The northern light in at the doorë shone, For window on the wall ne was there none, Through which men mighten any light discern. The door was all of adamant etern, Yclenched overthwart and endëlong ⁹ With iron tough, and for to make it strong, Every pillar the temple to sustene Was tunnë-great, ¹⁰ of iron bright and shene. There saw I first the dark imagining Of felony, and all the compassing; The cruel irë, red as any glede, ¹¹ The pickpursë, and eke the palë drede;	1980
		1990
		2000

The smiler with the knife under the cloak,	2001	¹ Stable.
.The shepen ¹ burning with the blackë smoke;		
The treason of the murd'ring in the bed,		
The open war, with woundës all bebled;		
Conteke ² with bloody knife, and sharp menace.		
All full of chirking ³ was that sorry place.		² Conten- tion. ³ Disagree- able sound.
The slayer of himself yet saw I there,		
His heartë-blood hath bathed all his hair:		
The nail ydriven in the shode ⁴ on height, ⁵		
The coldë death, with mouth gaping upright.	2010	⁴ Hair of the head ⁵ High.
Amiddës of the temple sat Mischance,		
With discomfort and sorry countenance,		
Yet saw I Woodness laughing in his rage,		
Armed Complaint, Outhées, ⁶ and fierce Outrage;		⁶ Outcry.
The carrain ⁷ in the bush, with throat ycarven,		⁷ Corpse.
A thousand slain, and not of qualm ⁸ ystarven; ⁹		⁸ Sickness. ⁹ Dead.
The tyrant, with the prey by force yreft;		
The town destroyed, there was nothing left.		
Yet saw I brent the shippës hoppësteres, ¹⁰		
The hunt ¹¹ ystrangled with the wildë bears:	2020	¹⁰ The dancing ships. ¹¹ Hunter.
The sow fretting ¹² the child right in the cradle;		¹² Devour- ing.
The cook yscalded, for all his long ladle.		
Nought was forgot by th' infortune of Martë		
The carter overridden with his cartë;		
Under the wheel full low he lay adown.		
There were also of Martës division,		
Th' armourer, and the bowyer, ¹³ and the smith,		¹³ Archer.
That forgeth sharpe swordës on his stith. ¹⁴		¹⁴ Anvil.
And all above depainted in a tower		
Saw I Conquest, sitting in great honour,	2030	
With thilkë ¹⁵ sharpe sword over his head		
Yhanging by a subtle twined thread.		
Depainted was the slaughter of Julius,		
Of great Nero, and of Antonius:		¹⁵ That.

All be that thilkē time they were unborn,
 Yet was their death depainted therebeforn,
 By menacing of Mars, right by figure,
 So was it showed in that portraitūre
 As is depainted in the circles above,
 Who shall be slain or ellēs dead for love.
 Sufficeth one ensample in stories old,
 I may not reckon them allē, though I wold.

2035

The statue of Mars upon a cartē stood
 Armed, and looked grim as he were wood,¹
 And over his head there shinen two figures
 Of starrēs, that be cleped in scriptures,
 That one Puella, that other Rubeus.*
 This god of armēs was arrayed thus:
 A wolf there stood before him at his feet
 With eyen red, and of a man he eat:
 With subtle pencil painted was this story,
 In redouting² of Mars and of his glory.

2040

Now to the temple of Dian the chaste
 As shortly as I can I will me haste,
 To tellen you of the descriptioun,
 Depainted by the wallēs up and down,
 Of hunting and of shamefast chastity.
 There saw I how woful Calistope,*
 When that Dian aggrieved was with her,
 Was turned from a woman till a bear,
 And after was she made the lodēstar:³
 Thus was it painted, I can say no far;⁴
 Her son is eke a star as men may see.
 There saw I Danē yturned till a tree,

2050

* 'Puella,' and 'Rubeus:' two figures in Geomancy, representing two constellations—the one signifying Mars retrograde, the other Mars direct.
 + 'Calistope,' or Callisto: daughter of Lycaon—seduced by Jupiter—turned into a bear by Juno (or Diana)—and placed afterwards, with her son, as the Great Bear among the stars.

¹ Mad.² Rever-
ence.³ Pole-star.⁴ Farther.

I mean not her the goddess Dianë, 2065
 But Peneus' daughter, which that hight Danë.
 There saw I Acteon an hart ymaked,¹
 For vengeance that he saw Dian all naked:
 I saw how that his houndës have him caught,
 And freten² him, for that they knew him naught.

2065

¹ Made.

Yet painted was a little farthermore, 2071
 How Atalanta hunted the wild boar,
 And Meleager, and many other mo,
 For which Diana wrought them care and woe.
 There saw I many another wonder story,
 The which me list not drawnen to memôry.

2071

² Tore.

This goddess on an hart full highë set,³
 With smallë houndës all about her feet,
 And underneath her feet she had a moon,
 Waxing it was, and shouldë wanen soon. 2080
 In gaudy green her statue clothed was,
 With bow in hand, and arrows in a case.
 Her eyen castë she full low adown,
 There Pluto hath his darkë regiou.
 A woman travailing was her beforne,
 But for her child so longë was unborn
 Full piteously Lucina* gan she call,
 And sayed; 'Help, for thou mayst best of all.'
 Well could he painten lifely that it wrought,
 With many a florin he the huës bought. 2090

2080

³ Seated.

Now be these listës made, and Theseus
 That at his greatë cost arrayed thus
 The temples, and the théatre everydeal,⁴
 When it was done, him liked wonder well.
 But stint⁵ I will of Theseus a lite,⁶
 And speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

2090

⁴ Every part.

The day approacheth of their returning,

⁵ Cease to speak.⁶ Little.

* 'Lucina:' another name for Diana—as the goddess of child-bearing.
 VOL. L

¹ Contest.

That everich should an hundred knightës bring, 2098
 The battle to darrain,¹ as I you told;
 And till Athens, their covenant for to hold,
 Hath everich of them brought an hundred
 knightës,

² Surely.
³ Believed.
⁴ Since.

Well armed for the war at allë rightës.
 And sikerly² there trowed³ many a man,
 That never,* sithen⁴ that the world began,
 As for to speak of knighthood of their hand,
 As far as God hath maked sea and land,
 N'as,⁵ of so few, so noble a company.

⁶ Was not.

For every wight that loved chivalry,
 And would, his thankës,⁶ have a passant⁷ name,
 Hath prayed, that he might be of that game, 2110
 And well was him, that thereto chosen was.
 For if there fell to-morrow such a case,
 Ye knowen well, that every lusty knight,
 That loveth *par amour*, and hath his might,
 Were it in Engleland, or ellëswhere,
 They would, their thankës, willen to be there.
 To fight for a lady, ah! *benedicite*,
 It were a lusty⁸ sightë for to see.

⁹ Pleasant.

And right so fareden they with Palamon;
 With him there wenten knightës many one. 2120
 Some will be armed in an habergeon,
 And in a breast-plate, and in a gipon;⁹
 And some will have a pair of platës large;
 And some will have a Prusse shield, or a targe;
 Some will be armed on his leggës weel,¹⁰
 And have an axe, and some a mace of steel.
 There n'is no newë guise, that it n'as old.

¹⁰ Well.

* 'Never:' that is, Never since the world began was there assembled from every part of the earth, in so short a space, such a company of brave and noble knights.

Armed they weren, as I have you told,
Everich after his opinion.

2128

There mayst thou see coming with Palamon
Licurge himself, the greatē king of Thrace:
Black was his beard, and manly was his face.
The circles of his eyen in his head
They gloweden betwixen yellow and red,
And like a griffin looked he about,
With kemped¹ hairēs on his browēs stout;
His limbēs great, his brawnēs hard and strong,
His shoulders broad, his armēs round and long.
And as the guisē² was in his country,
Full high upon a car of gold stood he,
With fourē whitē bullēs in the trace.

¹ Combed.

2140

Instead of coat-armour on his harness,
With nailēs yellow, and bright as any gold,
He had a bearēs skin, coal-black for old.
His longē hair was kempt behind his back,
As any raven's feather it shone for black.

² Fashion.

A wreath of gold arm-great,³ of hugē weight,
Upon his head sate full of stonēs bright,
Of fine rubies and of diāmants.

³ Thick as a man's arm.

About his car there wenten white alauns,⁴
Twenty and mo, as great as any steer,
To hunten at the lion or the deer,
And followed him, with muzzle fast ybound,
Collared with gold, and torettes⁵ filed round.
An hundred lordēs had he in his rout⁶
Armed full well, with heartēs stern and stout.

2150

⁴ Mastiffs.⁵ Rings.⁶ Retinue.

With Arcita, in stories as men find,
The great Emetrius the king of Ind,
Upon a steedē bay, trapped in steel,
Covered with cloth of gold diāpred⁷ weel,
Came riding like the god of armēs, Mars.

2160

⁷ Diversified with flourishes.

¹ A kind of silk.² Trimmed.³ Burnish-ed.⁴ Brimful.⁵ Citron, pale yellow.⁶ Freckles.⁷ Sprinkled.⁸ Mixed.⁹ Threw his eyes.¹⁰ Reckon.¹¹ Pleasant.¹² Amusement.

His coat-armour was of a cloth of Tars,¹ 2162
 Couched² with pearlës, white, and round and great.
 His saddle was of brent³ gold new ybeat;
 A mantélet upon his shoulders hanging
 Bretful⁴ of rubies red, as fire sparkling.
 His crispë hair like ringës was yrun,
 And that was yellow, and glittered as the sun.
 His nose was high, his eyen bright citrine,⁵
 His lippës round, his colour was sanguine, 2170
 A fewë fracknes⁶ in his face ysprent,⁷
 Betwixen yellow and black somedeal yment,⁸
 And as a lion he his looking cast.⁹
 Of fivë and twenty year his age I cast.¹⁰
 His beard was well begunnen for to spring;
 His voice was as a trumpë thundering.
 Upon his head he wear'd of laurel green
 A garland fresh and lusty¹¹ for to seen
 Upon his hand he bare for his deduit¹²
 An eagle tame, as any lily white. 2180
 An hundred lordës had he with him there,
 All armed, save their heads, in all their gear,
 Full richëly in allë manner thingës.
 For trusteth well, that earlës, dukës, kingës
 Were gathered in this noble company,
 For love, and for increase of chivalry.
 About this king there ran on every part
 Full many a tame lión and leópart.
 And in this wise, these lordës all and some
 Been on the Sunday to the city come 2190
 Abouten prime, and in the town alight.
 This Theseus, this duke, this worthy knight,
 When he had brought them into his city,
 And inned¹³ them, everich at his degree,
 He feasteth them, and doth so great labóur

¹³ Lodged.

To easen them, and do them all honōur, That yet men weenen ¹ that no mannēs wit Of none estate ne could amenden ² it. The minstrelsy, the service at the feast, The greatē giftēs to the most and least, The rich array of Theseus' palāce, Ne who sate first ne last upon the dais, ³ What ladies fairest been or best dancing, Or which of them can carol best or sing, Ne who most feelingly speaketh of love; What hawkēs sitten on the perch above, What houndēs liggen ⁴ on the floor adown, Of all this now make I no mentioun; But of the effect; that thinketh me the best; Now cometh the point, and hearkeneth ⁵ if you lest.	2196	¹ Think. ² Could not improve. ³ Elevated part of the hall. ⁴ Lie. ⁵ Hearken.
The Sunday night, or ⁶ day began to spring, When Palamon the larkē heardē sing, Although it n'ere ⁷ not day by hourēs two, Yet sāng the lark, and Palamon right tho ⁸ With holy heart, and with an high courāge He rose, to wenden ⁹ on his pilgrimage Unto the blissful Citherea benign, I meanē Venus, honourable and digne. ¹⁰ And in her hour he walketh forth a pace Unto the listēs, there her temple was,	2211	⁶ Ere. ⁷ Were not. ⁸ Then. ⁹ Go. ¹⁰ Worthy.
And down he kneeleth, and with humble chere ¹¹ And heartē sore, he said as ye shall hear. ‘Fairest of fair, O lady mine Venus, Daughter to Jove, and spouse of Vulcanus, Thou gladder of the mount of Citheron!* For thilkē ¹² love thou haddest to Adon ¹³ Have pity on my bitter tearēs' smart, And take mine humble prayer at thine heart.	2220	¹¹ Mien. ¹² That. ¹³ Adonia.
* ‘Citheron:’ or Cithera, one of the Ionian islands.		

'Alas! I ne have no language to tell
 The effectë, ne the torment of mine hell;
 Mine heartë may mine harmës not bewray;
 I am so cónfuse, that I cannot say.
 But mercy, lady bright, that knowest wele
 My thought, and seest what harmës that I feel.
 Consider all this, and rue¹ upon my sore,
 As wisly² as I shall for evermore,

¹ Pity.
² Truly.
³ Even
with.
⁴ Care.
⁵ Boast.

Emforth³ my might, thy truë servant be,
 And holden war alway with chastity:
 That make I mine avow, so ye me help.
 I kecpë⁴ nought of armës for to yelp,⁵

Ne ask I not to-morrow to have victóry,
 Ne rénown in this case, ne vain glory
 Of price of armës, blowen up and down,
 But I would have fully possessioun
 Of Emily, and die in her service;
 Find thou the manner how, and in what wise.

I reckë not, but it may better be,
 To have victory of them, or they of me,
 So that I have my lady in mine arms.
 For though so be that Mars is god of arms,

Your virtue is so great in heaven above,

That if you list, I shall well have my love.

Thy temple will I worship evermo,
 And on thine altar, where I ride or go,
 I will do sacrifice, and firës bete.⁶
 And if ye will not so, my lady sweet,
 Then pray I you, to-morrow with a spear
 That Arcita me through the heartë bear.
 Then reck I not, when I have lost my life,
 Though that Arcita win her to his wife.

This is the effect and end of my prayére;
 Give me my love, thou blissful lady dear.'

2229

2240

2250

2260

⁶ Kindle.

When the orison was done of Palamon,
His sacrifice he did, and that anon,
Full piteously, with allë circumstances,
All¹ tell I not as now his observances.
But at the last the statue of Venus shook,
And made a signë, whereby that he took,
That his prayér accepted was that day.
For though the signë shewed a delay,
Yet wist he well that granted was his boon;
And with glad heart he went him home full soon.

2263

¹ Al-though.

The third hour unequal that Palamon
Began to Venus' temple for to gone,
Up rose the sun, and up rose Emily,
And to the temple of Dian 'gan hie.
Her maidens, that she thither with her lad,
Full readily with them the fire they had,
Th' incense, the clothës, and the remnant all,
That to the sacrificë 'longen shall,
The hornës full of mead, as was the guise,
There lacked nought to do her sacrifice.
Smoking the temple, full of clothës fair,
This Emily with heartë debonair
Her body wash'd with water of a well.
But how she did her rite I dare not tell;
But it be any thing in general;
And yet it were a game² to hearen all;
To him that meaneth well it n'ere⁴ no charge:
But it is good a man to be at large.
Her bright hair combed was, untressed all.
A coroun of a green oak cereal⁵
Upon her head was set full fair and meet.
Two firës on the altar 'gan she bete,⁶
And did her thingës, as men may behold
In Stace⁷ of Thebes, and these bookës old.

2270

2280

² Unless.³ Pleasure.⁴ Were not.⁵ Belong-ing to the oak.⁶ Kindle.⁷ Statius.

¹ Mien. ² Wottest. ³ Suffered for. ⁴ Field spora. ⁵ Quench- ed.	<p>When kindled was the fire, with piteous cheer¹ Unto Dian she spake as ye may hear. 2298</p> <p>‘O chastë goddess of the woodës green, To whom both heaven and earth and sea is seen, Queen of the reign of Pluto, dark and low, Goddess of maidens, that mine heart hast know Full many a year, and wost² what I desire, As keep me from thy vengeance and thine ire, That Acteon aboughtë³ cruelly: Chastë goddëss, well wottest thou that I Desire to be a maiden all my life, Ne never will I be no love nor wife. I am (thou wost) yet of thy company, A maid, and love hunting and venery,⁴ 2310 And for to walken in the woodës wild, And not to be a wife, and be with child. Nought will I knownen company of man. Now help me, lady, since ye may and can, For those three formës that thou hast in thee. And Palamon, that hath such love to me, And eko Arcite, that loveth me so sore, This grace I prayë thee withouten more, As sendë love and peace betwixt them two: And from me turn away their heartës so, 2320 That all their hotë love, and their desire, And all their busy torment, and their fire Be queint,⁵ or turned in another place. And if so be thou wilt not do me grace, Or if my destiny be shapen so, That I shall needës have one of them two, As send me him that most desireth me. ‘Behold, goddess of cleanë chastity, The bitter tears that on my cheekës fall. Since thou art maid, and keeper of us all,</p>
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My maidenhood thou keep and well conserve,
And while I live, a maid I will thee serve.'

2331

The firës burn upon the altar clear,
While Emily was thus in her prayére:
But suddenly she saw a sightë quaint.
For right anon one of the firës queint,
And quick'd² again, and after that anon
That other fire was queint, and all agone:
And as it queint, it made a whisteling,
As do these brandës wet in their burning.
And at the brandës' end outran anon
As it were bloody droppës many one:
For which so sore aghast was Emily,
That she was well-nigh mad, and 'gan to cry,
For she ne wistë what it signified;
But only for the fearë thus she cried,
And wept, that it was pity for to hear.

2340

And therewithal Diana 'gan appear
With bow in hand, right as an hunteress,
And saidë, 'Daughter, stint³ thine heaviness.
Among the goddës high it is affirm'd,
And by etern word written and confirm'd,
Thou shalt be wedded unto one of tho,⁴
That have for thee so muchel care and woe:
But unto which of them I may not tell.
Farewell, for here I may no longer dwell.
The firës which that on mine altar brenn,
Shall thee declaren ere that thou go henne,⁵
Thine aventure of love, as in this case.'

2350

¹ Went out.² Revived.³ Cease.⁴ Those.⁵ Hence.⁶ Quiver.

And with that word, the arrows in the case⁶
Of the goddess clatteren fast and ring.
And forth she went, and made a vanishing,
For which this Emily astonied was,
And saidë; 'What amounteth⁷ this, alas!

2361

⁷ What is
the re-
sult of.

	I puttē me in thy protectiōn, Diane, and in thy dispositiōn.' And home she go'th anon the nextē way. This is the effect, there n'is no more to say. The nextē hour of Mars follōwing this Arcite unto the temple walked is Of fiercē Mars, to do his sacrifice With all the ritēs of his pagan wise. ¹ With piteous ² heartē and high devotiōn. Right thus to Mars he said his orison. ‘O strongē god, that in the regnēs ³ cold Of Thrace honōured art, and lord yhold, ⁴ And hast in every reign and every land Of armēs all the bridle in thine hand, And them fortūnest as thee list devise, Accept of me my piteous sacrifice. If so be that my youthē may deserve, And that my might be worthy for to serve Thy godhead, that I may be one of thine, Then pray I thee to rue upon my pine, For thilkē ⁵ pain, and thilkē hotē fire, In which thou whilom burnedst for desire Whennē that thou usedest the beauty Of fairē youngē Venus, fresh and free, And haddest her in armēs at thy will: Although thee onēs on a time misfill, ⁶ When Vulcanus had caught thee in his las, ⁷ And found thee ligging ⁸ by his wife, alas! For thilk sorrow that was then in thine heart, Have ruth ⁹ as well upon my painēs smart. ‘I am youngē and unconning, ¹⁰ as thou wost, ¹¹ And, as I trow, with love offended most, That ever was any livēs creature: For she, that doth ¹² me all this woe endure,	2365 2370 2380 2390
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¹ Custom.² Implor-ing.³ Realma.⁴ Held.⁵ That.⁶ Wert un-lucky.⁷ Snare.⁸ Lying.⁹ Pity.¹⁰ Un-known-ing.¹¹ Wottest.¹² Maketh.

Ne recketh never, whether I sink or fleet.¹
 And well I wot, or she me mercy hete,²
 I must with strengthē win her in the place:
 And well I wot, withouten help or grace
 Of thee, ne may my strengthē not avail:
 Then help me, lord, to-morrow in my bataille,
 For thilkē³ fire that whilom burned thee,
 As well as that this fire now burneth me;
 And do,⁴ that I to-morrow may have victory.
 Mine be the travail, and thine be the glory.
 Thy sovereign temple will I most honouren
 Of any place, and alway most labouren
 In thy pleaseance and in thy craftēs strong.
 And in thy temple I will my banner hong,
 And all the armēs of my company,
 And evermore, until that day I die,
 Eternē fire I will before thee find,
 And eke to this avow I will me bind.
 My beard, my hair that hangeth long adown,
 That never yet felt none offension
 Of razor nor of sheers, I will thee give,
 And be thy truē servant while I live.
 Now, lord, have ruth upon my sorrows sore,
 Give me the victory, I axē thee no more.'

The prayer stint⁵ of Arcita the strong,
 The ringēs on the temple door that hong,
 And eke the doorēs clattereden full fast,
 Of which Arcita somewhat him aghast.
 The firēs burnt upon the altar bright,
 That it 'gan all the temple for to light;
 A sweetē smell anon the ground up yaf,⁶
 And Arcita anon his hand up haf,⁷
 And more incēnse into the fire he cast,
 With other ritēs more, and at the last

2399 ¹ Float.² Had shewn.³ That.⁴ Cause.

2410

⁵ Ceased.⁶ Gave.⁷ Heaved.

The statue of Mars began his hauberk ring;
And with that sound he heard a murmuring
Full low and dim, that saidē thus, ‘Victory.’
For which he gave to Mars honour and glory.

2438

And thus with joy, and hopē well to fare,
Arcite anon unto his inn is fare,
As fain¹ as fowl is of the brightē sun.

And right anon such strife there is begun

2440

For thilkē² granting, in the heaven above,
Betwixen Venus the goddess of love,
And Mars the sternē god armipotent,

* Stop. That Jupiter was busy it to stent:³
Till that the palē Saturnus the cold,
That knew so many of adventures old,

Found in his old experience and art,
That he full soon hath pleased every part.

* Age. As sooth is said, eld⁴ hath great advantage,
In eld is bothē wisdom and usage:

2450

* Surpass in coun- sel. Men may the old out-run, but not out-rede.⁵

Saturn anon, to stinten strife and drede,
All be it that it is against his kind,
Of all this strife he 'gan a remedy find.

‘My dearē daughter Venus,’ quoth Saturn,

‘My course, that hath so widē for to turn,
Hath morē power than wot any man.
Mine is the drenching in the sea so wan,
Mine is the prison in the darkē cote,⁶

Mine is the strangle and hanging by the throat,

The murmur, and the churlēs rebelling,

The groyning,⁷ and the privy empoisoning.

* Cottage. I do vengeance and pleine⁸ correction,
While I dwell in the sign of the lion.
Mine is the ruin of the highē halls,
The falling of the towers and of the walls

* Discon- tent.

* Full.

Upon the miner, or the carpenter: I slew Samson in shaking the pillar, Mine be also the maladiés cold, The darkë treasons, and the castës ¹ old: My looking is the father of pestilence. Now weep no more, I shall do diligence, That Palamon, that is thine owen knight, Shall have his lady, as thou hast him hight. ² Though Mars shall help his knight, yet natheless Betwixen you there must sometime be peace: All be ye not of one complexión, That causeth all day such división. I am thine ayel, ³ ready at thy will; Weep now no more, I shall thy lust ⁴ fulfl.'	2467	¹ Contrivances. ² Promised.
Now will I stenten ⁵ of the gods above, Of Mars, and of Venus, goddess of love, And tellen you as plainly as I can The great effect, for which that I began. Great was the feast in Athens thilkë ⁶ day, And eke the lusty season of that May Made every wight to be in such pleasance, That all that Monday jousten they and dance, And spenden it in Venus' high service. But by the causë that they shoulden rise	2480	
Early a-morrow for to see the sight, Unto their restë wenten they at night. And on the morrow when the day 'gan spring, Of horse and harness noise and clattering There was in the hostelries all about: And to the palace rode there many a rout Of lordës, upon steedës and palfreys. There mayst thou see devising of harness So uncouth and so rich, and wrought so weel Of goldsmithry, of brouding, ⁷ and of steel;	2490	⁵ Grand-father. ⁶ Pleasure. ⁷ Stop to speak. ⁸ That.
	2500	⁷ Embroidering.

¹ Head-pieces. ² Trap-pings. ³ Ornamental clothea.	The shieldës brightë, testeres, ¹ and trappures; ² 2501 Gold-hewen helmës, hauberks, coat-armures; Lordës in parëments ³ on their coursérs, Knightës of retinue, and eke squiérs, Nailing the spears, and helmës buckëling, Gniding ⁴ of shieldës, with lainers ⁵ lacing; There as need is, they weren nothing idle: The foamy steedës on the golden bridle Gnawing, and fast the armourers also With file and hammer pricking to and fro; 2510 Yeomen on foot, and commons many one With shortë stavës, thick as they may gone; ⁶ Pipës, trumpës, nakerës, ⁷ and clarions, That in the battle blowen bloody sounz; The palace full of people up and down, Here three, there ten, holding their questioun, ⁸ Divining ⁹ of these Theban knightës two. Some saiden thus, some said it shall be so; Some helden with him with the blackë beard, Some with the ballëd, some with the thick-hair'd; Some said he lookëd grim, and woulde fight: 2521 He hath a sparth ¹⁰ of twenty pound of weight. Thus was the hallë full of divining Long after that the sunnë 'gan up spring. The great Theseus that of his sleep is waked With minstrelsy and noise that was maked, Held yet the chamber of his palace rich, Till that the Theban knightës both ylich ¹¹ Honoured were, and to the palace fet. ¹²
¹⁰ Axe.	Duke Theseus is at a window set, 2530 Arrayed right as he were a god in throne: The people presseth thitherward full soon Him for to see, and do high reverence, And eke to hearken his hest ¹³ and his sentence.
¹¹ Alike. ¹² Fetched.	
¹³ Com-mand.	

An herald on a scaffold made an O,¹
 Till that the noise of the people was ydo:²
 And when he saw the people of noise all still,
 Thus shewed he the mighty dukë's will.

2535

¹ Ho, or
Hoyes.
² Done.

'The lord hath of his high discretion
 Considered, that it were destruction
 To gentle blood, to fighten in the guise
 Of mortal battle now in this emprise:
 Wherefore to shapen that they shall not die,
 He will his firstë purpose modify.

2540

'No man therefore, up' pain of loss of life,
 No manner shot, nor poleaxe, nor short knife
 Into the listës send, or thither bring.
 Ne short sword for to stick with point biting
 No man ne draw, nor bear it by his side.
 Ne no man shall unto his fellow ride

2550

But one course, with a sharp ygrounden spear:
 Foin³ if him list on foot, himself to were.⁴
 And he that is at mischief, shall be take,
 And not slain, but be brought unto the stake,
 That shall be ordained on either side,
 Thither he shall by force, and there abide.

³ Fence.
⁴ Defend.

And if so fall, the chiefëtain be take
 On either side, or ellës slay'th his make,⁵
 No longer shall the tourneying ylast.
 God speedë you; go forth and lay on fast. 2560
 With long sword and with mace fighteth⁶ your fill.
 Go now your way; this is the lordë's will.'

⁵ Match.⁶ Fight.

The voice of the people touched to the heaven,
 So loudë crierden they with merry steven:⁷
 'God savë such a lord that is so good,
 He willeth no destrucción of blood.'

⁷ Sound.

Up go the trumpës and the melody,
 And to the listës rit⁸ the company

⁸ Rides.

	By ordinance, throughout the city large,	2569
¹ Serge.	Hanged with cloth of gold, and not with sarge. ¹	
	Full like a lord this noble duke 'gan ride,	
	And these two Thebans upon either side:	
	And after rode the queen and Emily,	
	And after that another company	
	Of one and other, after their degree.	
	And thus they passen throughout the city,	
	And to the listës comen they by time:	
	It n'as not ² of the day yet fully prime. ³	
	When set was Theseus full rich and high,	
² Was not.	Hypolita the queen, and Emily,	2580
³ First quarter.	And other ladies in degrees about,	
	Unto the seatës presseth all the rout.	
	And westward, through the gatës under Mart,	
	Arcite, and eke the hundred of his part,	
	With banner red, is enter'd right anon;	
⁴ Same.	And in the selvë ⁴ moment Palamon	
	Is, under Venus, eastward in the place,	
⁵ Mien.	With banner white, and hardy chere ⁵ and face.	
	In all the world, to seeken up and down,	
	So even without variatioún	2590
	There n'ere such companies never tway.	
	For there was none so wise that couldë say,	
	That any haddë of other ádvantage	
	Of worthiness, ne of estate, nor age,	
	So even were they chosen for to guess.	
⁶ Array.	And in two ranges fairë they them dress. ⁶	
	When that their namës read were everich one,	
	That in their number guilë were there none,	
	Then were the gatës shut, and cried was loud;	
	'Do now your dévoir, youngë knightës proud.'	2600
⁷ Riding.	The heralds left their pricking ⁷ up and down.	
	Now ringen trumpës loud and clarion.	

s no more to say, but east and west 2603
 he spearës sadly¹ in the rest;
 i the sharpë spur into the side.
 see men who can joust, and who can
 le.
 hiveren shaftës upon shieldës thick;
 eth through the heartë-spoon² the prick.
 ingen spearës twenty foot on height;
 the swordës as the silver bright. 2610
 mës they to-hewen, and to-shred;³
 rst the blood, with stern streamës red.
 ighty maces the bones they to-brest.⁴
 ough the thickest of the throng 'gan threst.
 tumblen steedës strong, and down go'th all.
 eth under foot as doth a ball.
 ieth⁵ on his foe with a trunchoun,
 him hurtleth with his horse adown.
 ough the body is hurt, and sith ytake⁶
 his head, and brought unto the stake, 2620
 word⁷ was, right there he must abide.
 r led is on that other side.
 metime doth⁸ them Theseus to rest,
 o refresh, and drinken if them lest.⁹
 oft a day have thilkë¹⁰ Thebans two
 er met, and wrought each other woe:
 sed hath each other of them tway.
 i'as no tiger in the vale of Galaphay,¹¹
 that her whelp is stole, when it is lite,¹²
 il on the hunt, as is Arcite 2630
 lous heart upon this Palamon:
 Belmarie¹³ there n'is so fell lión,
 inted is, or for his hunger wood,¹⁴
 is prey desireth so the blood,
 mon to slay his foe Arcite.

¹ Carefully.² Concave part of breast.³ Strike in pieces.⁴ Burst.⁵ Striken.⁶ Afterwards taken.⁷ Agreement.⁸ Causes.⁹ Please.¹⁰ These.¹¹ Galapha in Mauritania.¹² Little.¹³ Not known.¹⁴ Mad.

	The jealous strokës on their helmës bite;	2636
¹ Red.	Out runneth blood on both their sidës rede. ¹	
	Sometime an end there is of every deed.	
	For ere the sun unto the restë went,	
² Seize.	The strongë king Emetrius 'gan hent ²	2640
	This Palamon, as he fought with Arcite,	
	And made his sword deep in his flesh to bite.	
	And by the force of twenty is he take	
³ Unyield- ed.	Unyolden, ³ and ydrawen to the stake,	
	And in the rescue of this Palamon	
	The strongë king Licurge is borne adown:	
	And king Emetrius for all his strength	
	Is borne out of his saddle a swordë's length,	
	So hit him Palamon ere he were take:	
	But all for nought, he was brought to the stake:	
	His hardy heartë might him helpen naught,	2651
	He must abiden, when that he was caught,	
	By force, and eke by composition.	
	Who sorroweth now but woful Palamon?	
	That mustë no more go again to fight,	
	And when that Theseus had seen that sight,	
	Unto the folk that foughten thus each one,	
	He cried, 'Ho! no more, for it is done.	
	I will be trüë judge, and not party.	
	Arcite of Thebes shall have Emily,	2660
	That by his fortune hath her fair ywon.'	
	Anon there is a noise of people begun	
	For joy of this, so loud and high withal,	
	It seemed that the listës shoulden fall.	
	What can now fairë Venus do above?	
	What saith she now? what doth this queen of love?	
	But weepeth so, for wanting of her will,	
	Till that her tearës in the listës fill: ⁴	
⁴ Fell.	She saidë: 'I am ashamed doubtëleas.'	

Saturnus saidë: ‘Daughter, hold thy peace. 2670
 Mars hath his will, his knight hath all his boon,
 And by mine head thou shalt be eased soon.’

The trumpers¹ with the loudë minstrelsy,
 The heralds, that so loudë yell and cry,
 Been in their joy for weal of Dan Arcite.
 But hearkeneth me, and stinteth² noise a lite,³
 Which⁴ a mirâcle there befell anon.

This fierce Arcite hath off his helm ydone,
 And on a courser for to shew his face
 He pricketh endëlong the largë place,
 Looking upward upon this Emily; 2680
 And she again him cast a friendly eye,
 (For women, as to speaken in commûne,⁵
 They followen all the favour of fortune,)
 And was all his in chere,⁶ as his in heart.
 Out of the ground a fury infernal start,
 From Pluto sent, at réquest of Saturn,
 For which his horse for fearë 'gan to turn,
 And leap'd aside, and founder'd as he leap:
 And ere that Arcite may take any keep,⁷ 2690
 He pight⁸ him on the pummel⁹ of his head,
 That in the place he lay as he were dead,
 His breast to-bursten with his saddle-bow.
 As black he lay as any coal or crow,
 So was the blood yrunnen in his face.

Anon he was yborne out of the place
 With heartë sore, to Theseus' palace.
 Then was he carven¹⁰ out of his harnéss,
 And in a bed ybrought full fair and blive,¹¹
 For he was yet in memory, and live, 2700
 And alway crying after Emily.

Duke Theseus, with all his company,
 Is comen home to Athens his city,

¹ Trumpeters.

² Cease.
³ Little.
⁴ For what.

To speak generally.

⁵ Countenance.

⁶ Care.

⁷ Pitched.
⁸ Top.

¹⁰ Cut.
¹¹ Quickly.

With allë bliss and great solemnity. 2704
 All be it that this áventure was fall,
 He n'oldë not discomforthen them all.
 Men saiden eke, that Arcite shall not die,
 He shall be healed of his malady.
 And of another thing they were as fain,
 That of them allë was there none yslain, 2710
 All¹ were they sore yhurt, and namely one,
 That with a spear was thirled² his breast-bone.
 To other woundës, and to broken arms,
 Some hadden salvës, and some hadden charms:
 And pharmacies of herbs, and ekë save³
 They draken, for they would their livës have.
 For which this noble duke, as he well can,
 Comfôrteth and honóureth every man,
 And madë revel all the longë night,
 Unto the strangë lordës, as was right.
 Ne there n'as holden no discomforthing,
 But as at joustës or a tourneying;
 For soothly there n'as no discomfiture,
 For falling n'is not but an áventure.
 Ne to be led by force unto a stake
 Unyolden,⁴ and with twenty knightës take,
 One person all alone, withouten mo,
 And haried⁵ forth by armës, foot, and toe,
 And eke his steedë driven forth with staves,
 With footmen, bothë yeomen and eke knaves,⁶ 2720
 It was aretted⁷ him no villainy:
 There may no man clepen it cowárdy.
 For which anon Duke Theseus let cry,
 To stenten⁸ allë rancour and envy,
 The grec⁹ as well of one side as of other,
 And either side aliko, as other's brother:
 And gave them giftës after their degreee,

¹ Al-
though.² Pierced.³ The herb
sage.⁴ Un-
yielden.⁵ Dragged.⁶ Servants.⁷ Imputed.⁸ Stay.⁹ Prize.

And held a feastë fully dayës three : 2738
 And conveyed the kingës worthily
 Out of his town a journee¹ largëly.
 And home went every man the rightë way,
 There n'as no more but, ' Farewell, Have good
 day.'

Of this battaïlle I will no more indite,
 But speak of Palamon and of Arcite.

Swelleth the breast of Arcite, and the sore
 Increaseth at his heartë more and more.

The clotted blood, for any leachë-craft,
 Corrupteth, and is in his bouke² ylaft,
 That neither veinë-blood,³ ne ventousing,⁴
 Ne drink of herbës may be his helping. 2750

The virtue expulsive, or animal,
 From thilkë virtue cleped⁵ natural,
 Ne may the venom voiden, ne expel.

The pipës of his lungës 'gan to swell,
 And every lacert⁶ in his breast adown
 Is shent⁷ with venom and corruptioún.
 Him gaineth neither, for to get his life,
 Vomit upwárd, ne downward laxative ;
 All is to-bursten thilkë régión ;

Nature hath now no domination. 2760

And certainly there⁸ nature will not werche,⁹
 Farewell physic; go bear the man to cherche.¹⁰
 This is all and some, that Arcite mustë die.
 For which he sendeth after Emily,
 And Palamon, that was his cousin¹¹ dear.
 Then said he thus, as ye shall after hear.

' Nought may the woful spirit in mine heart
 Declare one point of all my sorrows' smart
 To you, my lady, that I lovë most ;
 But I bequeath the service of my ghost 2770

¹ Day's
journey.

² Body.

³ Opening
⁴ a vein.
⁵ Cupping.

⁶ Called.

⁷ Muscle.

⁸ De-
stroyed.

⁹ Where.
¹⁰ Work.
¹¹ Church.

¹¹ Kins-
man.

To you aboven every creature,
Since that my life ne may no longer dure.
‘ Alas the woe ! alas the painës strong,
That I for you have suffered, and so long !
Alas the death ! alas, mine Emily !
Alas departing of our company !
Alas, mine heartë's queen ! alas, my wife !
Mine heartë's lady, ender of my life !
What is this world ? what asken men to have ?
Now with his love, now in his coldë gravo

2771

2780

Alone, withouten any company.
Farewell, my sweet, farewell, mine Emily,
And softë take me in your armës tway,
For love of God, and hearkeneth what I say.

‘ I have here with my cousin Palamon
Had strife and rancour many a day agone
For love of you, and for my jealousy.

¹ Surely.
² Guida.

And Jupiter so wis¹ my soulé gie,²
To speaken of a servant properly,

2790

With allë circumstances trüely,
That is to say, truth, honour, and knighthead,
Wisdom, humbless,³ estate, and high kindred,
Freedom, and all that 'longeth to that art,
So Jupiter have of my soulé part,
As in this world right now ne know I none,
So worthy to be loved as Palamon,
That serveth you, and will do all his life.
And if that ever ye shall be a wife,
Forget not Palamon, the gentle man.’

³ Humil-
ity.

And with that word his speechë fail began.
For from his feet up to his breast was come
The cold of death, that had him overnome.⁴
And yet moreover in his armës two
The vital strength is lost, and all ago.⁵

⁴ Over-
taken.

⁵ Gone.

Only the intellect, withouten more,
That dwelled in his heartë sick and sore,
'Gan failen, when the heartë feltë death;
Dusked his eyen two, and fail'd his breath.
But on his lady yet cast he his eye;
His lastë word was; ' Mercy, Emily !'
His spirit changed house, and wentë there,
As I came never I cannot tellen where.
Therefore I stent,¹ I am no divinister;
Of soulës find I not in this register.
Ne me list not th' opinions to tell*
Of them, though that they writen where they dwell.
Arcite is cold, there Mars his soulë gie.²
Now will I speaken forth of Emily.

Shright³ Emily, and howleth Palamon,
And Theseus his sister took anon
Swooning, and bare her from the corpse away.
What helpeth it to tarrien forth the day,
To tellen how she wept both even and morrow!
For in such casë women have such sorrow,
When that their husbands been from them ago,⁴
That for the more part they sorrowen so,
Or ellës fallen in such malady,
That attë lastë certainly they die.

Infinite been the sorrows and the tears
Of oldë folk, and folk of tender years,
In all the town, for death of this Theban:
For him there weepeth bothë child and man.
So great a weeping was there none certaint,
When Hector was ybrought, all fresh yslain,
To Troy; alas! the pity that was there,
Scratching of cheekës, rending eke of hair.

* 'Nor care I to tell the notions about them:' a fling at Boccacio's pompous account of Arcite's ascent to heaven.

¹ Stop.

² Guide.

³ Shriek-ed.

⁴ Gone.

‘Why woldest thou be dead?’ these women cry,
‘And haddest gold enough, and Emily.’ 2838

No man might gladden this Duke Theseus,
Saving his oldē father Egeus,
That knew this worldē’s transmutatiōn,
As he had seen it changen up and down.
Joy after woe, and woe after gladness;
And shewed him ensample and likeness.

‘Right as there diēd never man (quoth he)
That he ne lived in earth in some degreee,
Right so there lived never man (he said)
In all this world, that sometime he ne died.
This world n’is but a throughfare full of woe,
And we be pilgrims, passing to and fro:
Death is an end of every worldēs sore.’ 2839

And o’er all this yet said he muchel more
To this effect, full wisely to exhort
The people, that they should them recomfōrt.

¹ Care. Duke Theseus with all his busy cure¹
He casteth now, where that the sepulture
Of good Arcite may best ymaked be,
And eke most honourable in his degreee.
And at the last he took conclusiōn,

That there as first Arcite and Palamon
Hadden for love the battle them between,
That in that selvē² grovē, sote³ and green,
There as he had his amorous desires,
His cómplaint, and for love his hotē fires,
He wouldē make a fire, in which the office
Of funeral he might all accomplice;

⁴ Leave, or give.
⁵ Row.
⁶ Log.
⁷ Burn. And let⁴ anon command to hack and hew
The oakēs old, and lay them on a rew⁵
In culpons,⁶ well arrayed for to brenne.⁷
His officers with swiftē feet they renne 2840

¹ Same.
² Sweet.

⁴ Leave, or give.
⁵ Row.
⁶ Log.
⁷ Burn.

And ride anon at his commandēment. 2871
 And after this, this Theseus hath sent
 After a bier, and it all oversprad
 With cloth of gold, the richest that he had;
 And of the samē suit he clad Arcite.
 Upon his handēs were his glovēs white,
 Eke on his head a crown of laurel green,
 And in his hand a sword full bright and keen.
 He laid him bare the visage on the bier,
 Therewith he wept that pity was to hear. 2880
 And for the people shouldē see him all,
 When it was day he brought him to the hall,
 That roareth of the crying and the soun.

Then came this woful Theban, Palamon,
 With flotery¹ beard, and ruggy ashy heres,²
 In clothēs black, ydropped all with tears,
 And (passing over of weeping Emily)
 The ruefullest of all the company.

And inasmuch as the service should be
 The more noble and rich in his degree, 2890
 Duke Theseus let forth three steedēs bring,
 That trapped were in steel all glittering.
 And covered with the arms of Dan Arcite.
 And eke upon these steedēs great and white
 There satten folk, of which one bare his shield,
 Another his spear up in his hands held;
 The thirdē bare with him his bow Turkeis,
 Of brent³ gold was the case⁴ and the harness:
 And ridden forth a pace with sorrowful chere⁵
 Toward the grove, as ye shall after hear. 2900

The noblest of the Greekēs that there were
 Upon their shoulders carrieden the bier,
 With slackē pace, and eyen red and wete,
 Throughout the city, by the master street,⁶

¹ Flowing.² Hair.³ Bur-nished.⁴ Quiver.⁵ Mien.⁶ Principal street.

That spread was all with black, and wonder high
 Right of the same is all the street ywrie.¹

2906

Upon the right hand went old Egeus,
 And on that other side Duke Theseus,
 With vessels in their hand of gold full fine,
 All full of honey, milk, and blood, and wine;²
 Eke Palamon, with full great company:
 And after that came woful Emily,
 With fire in hand, as was that time the guise,
 To do the office of funeral service.

2910

High labour, and full great apparelling
 Was at the service of that fire-making,
 That with his greenë top the heaven raught,³
 And twenty fathom of breadth the armës straught:⁴
 This is to say, the boughës were so broad.
 Of straw first there was layed many a load.

2920

But how the fire was maked up on height,
 And eke the namës how the treës hight,
 As oak, fir, birch, asp,⁴ alder, holm, poplére,
 Willow, elm, plane, ash, box, chestnut, lind,⁵ laurere,
 Maple, thorn, beech, hazel, yew, whipul tree,⁶
 How they were fell'd, shall not be told for me;

Ne how the goddës rannen up and down
 Disherited of their habitatioún,
 In which they woneden in rest and peace,
 Nymphës, Faunës, Hamadryades;

2930

Ne how the beastës, and the birdës all
 Fledden for fearë, when the wood 'gan fall;
 Ne how the ground aghast was of the light,
 That was not wont to see the sunnë bright;
 Ne how the fire was couched⁷ first with stre,⁸
 And then with dry stickës cloven a-three,
 And then with greenë wood and spicerie,
 And then with cloth of gold and with pierrie,⁹

¹ Covered.² Reached.³ Stretch-ed.⁴ Aspen.⁵ Linden-tree.⁶ (Not known.)⁷ Laid.⁸ Straw.⁹ Precious stones.

arlands hanging with full many a flower, 2939
 lyrrh, th' incéñse also with sweet odoúr;
 w Arcita lay among all this,
 iat richess about his body is;
 w that Emily, as was the guise,
 i the fire of funeral servíce;
 w she swooned when she made the fire,
 iat she spake, ne what was her desire;
 iat jewellës men in the firë cast,
 that the fire was great and brentë¹ fast;
 w some cast their shield, and some their
 pear,
 f their vestimentës, which they were,² 2950
 uppës full of wine, and milk, and blood,
 he fire, that burnt as it were wood;³
 w the Greekës with a hugë rout
 timës rideñ all the fire about
 the left hand, with a loud shouting,
 hriës with their spearës clattering;
 hriës how the ladies 'gan to cry;
 w that led was homeward Emily;
 w Arcite is burnt to ashen cold;
 w the likë-wakë⁴ was yhold
 ilkë night, ne how the Greekës play.
 akë-plays ne keep⁵ I not to say:
 wrestled best naked, with oil anoint,
 io that bare him best in no disjoint.⁶
 not tellen eke how they all gone
 till Athenës when the play is done;
 iortly to the point now will I wend,
 naken of my longë tale an end.
 process and by length of certain years
 enten⁷ is the mourning and the tears
 eekës, by one general assent.

¹ Burnt.² Wore.³ Mad.⁴ Late-wake.⁵ Care.⁶ Disad-vantage.⁷ Stopped.

	Then seemeth me there was a parlement At Athens, upon certain points and case: Amongēs the which points yspoken was To have with certain countries álliance, And have of Thebans fully obcisance. For which this noble Theseus anon Let senden after gentle Palamon, Unwist of him, what was the cause and why: But in his blackē clothēs sorrowfully 2972 He came at his commandément on hie; ¹ Then sentē Theseus for Emily.	
¹ In haste.	When they were set, and hush'd was all the place And Theseus abiden hath a space, Or any word came from his wisē breast His eyen set ² he there ³ as was his lest, ⁴ And with a sad visage he sighed still, And after that right thus he said his will.	2980
^{• Fixed.} ^{• Where.} ^{• Pleasure.}	'The firstē mover of the cause above When he first made the fairē chain of love, 2990 Great was th' effect, and high was his intent; Well wist he why, and what thereof he meant: For with that fairē chain of love he bond The fire, the air, the water, and the lond In certain bondēs, that they may not flee: That samē prince and mover eke (quoth he) Hath stablish'd, in this wretched world adown, Certain of dayēs and duratiōn To all that are engender'd in this place, Over the which day they ne may not pace, All ⁵ may they yet the dayēs well abridge.	3000
^{• Al- though.}	There needeth none authority allege, For it is proved by experience, But that me list declarēn my sentence.	

Then may men by this order well discern,
 That thilkë¹ mover stable is and etern.
 Well may men knowen, but it be a fool,
 That every part deriveth from his whole.
 For nature hath not taken his beginning
 Of no party ne cantle² of a thing,
 But of a thing that perfect is and stable,
 Descending so, till it be corruptible.
 And therefore of his wisë purveyance
 He hath so well beset his ordinance,
 That species of thingës and progressiôns
 Shallen enduren by successiôns,
 And not etern, withouten any lie:
 This mayst thou understand and see at eye.
 Lo the oak, that hath so long a nourishing
 From the time that it 'ginneth first to spring,
 And hath so long a life, as ye may see,
 Yet at the lastë wasted is the tree.
 Considerereth³ eke, how that the hardë stone
 Under our feet, on which we tread and gone,
 It wasteth, as it lieth by the way.
 The broadë river sometime waxeth drey.
 The greatë townës see we wane and wend.⁴
 Then may ye see that all thing hath an end.
 Of man and woman see we well also,
 That needës in one of the termës two,
 That is to say, in youth or ellës age,
 He must be dead, the king as shall a page;
 Some in his bed, some in the deepë sea,
 Some in the largë field, as ye may see:
 There helpeth nought, all go'th that ilkë⁵ way:
 Then may I say that allë thing must die.
 What maketh this but Jupiter the king?
 The which is prince, and cause of allë thing,

3005

¹ This.

3010

² Piece.

3020

³ Think.

3030

⁴ Advance.⁵ Same.

	Converting all unto his proper will, From which it is derived, sooth to tell. And here-against no creature on live ¹ Of no degree availeth for to strive. Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me, To maken virtue of necessity, And take it well, that we may not eschew, And namely that to us all is due. And whoso grutcheth ² ought, he doth folly, And rebel is to him that all may gie. ³ And certainly a man hath most honour To dien in his excellence and flower,	3039
¹ That livea.		
² Mur- murs.		
³ Direct.		
⁴ Sure.	When he is sicker ⁴ of his goodë name. Then hath he done his friend, ne him, no shame; And gladder ought his friend be of his death, When with honour is yielden up his breath, Than when his name appalled ⁵ is for age; For all forgotten is his vassalage. ⁶ Then is it best, as for a worthy fame, To dien when a man is best of name. The contrary of all this is wilfulness. Why grutchen we? why have we heaviness, That good Arcite, of chivalry the flower, Departed is, with duty and honour, Out of this foulë prison of this life?	3050
⁵ Made pale.		
⁶ Good service.	Why grutchen here his cousin and his wife Of his welfare, that loven him so well? Can he them thank? nay, God wot, never a deal, ⁷ That both his soul, and eke themselves offend, And yet they may their lustës not amend.*	3060
⁷ A whit.	‘What may I cónclude of this long serio, But after sorrow I rcede ⁸ us to be merry, And thanken Jupiter of all his grace.	3070
⁸ Advise.		

* ‘Lustës not amend :’ are not able to amend their deaires.

And ere that we departen from this place,
I redë that we make of sorrows two
One perfect joyë lasting evermo:
And looketh now where most sorrow is herein,
There will I first amenden and begin.

'Sister, (quod he) this is my full assent,
With all th' advice here of my parlement,
That gentle Palamon, your owen knight,
That serveth you with will, and heart, and might,
And ever hath done, since ye first him knew,
That ye shall of your grace upon him rue,³⁰⁸¹
And taken him for husband and for lord:
Lend me your hand, for this is our accord.

'Let see now of your womanly pity.
He is a kingë's brother's son pardie..
And though he were a poorë bachelere,
Since he hath served you so many a year,
And had for you so great adversity,
It mustë be considered, 'lieveth² me.
For gentle mercy oweth³ to passen right.'⁴
Then said he thus to Palamon the knight;
'I trow there needeth little sermoning
To maken you assenten to this thing.
Cometh near, and take your lady by the hand.'

Betwixen them was maked anon the band,
That hightë matrimony or marriage,
By all the counsel of the baronage.
And thus with alle bliss and melody
Hath Palamon ywedded Emily.
And God that all this widë world hath wrought,
Send him his love, that hath it dear ybought.
For now is Palamon in alle weal,
Living in bliss, in riches, and in heal,⁵
And Emily him loveth so tenderly,

¹ Have
pity.

² Believe
me.
³ Is due.
⁴ A just
sentence.

⁵ Health.

¹ Affic-
tion.

And he her serveth all so gentilly,
That never was there no word them between
Of jealousy, ne of none other teen ¹
Thus endeth Palamon and Emily;
And God save all this fairë company.

3106

3110

THE MILLER'S PROLOGUE.

hat the Knight had thus his talë told, 8111
 ie company n'as there young nor old,
 ne said it was a noble story,
 rthy to be drawen to memory;¹
 mely the gentles everich one.

stë lough² and swore, ‘So may I gone,³
 th aright; unbuckled is the mail;
 now who shall tell another tale:
 sly this game is well begun.

Ileth ye, Sir Monk, if that ye conne,⁴
 nat, to quiten⁵ with the Knightë's tale.
 Miller that for-drunken was all pale,

unethes⁶ upon his horse he sat,
 d⁷ avalen⁸ neither hood ne hat,
 en no man for his courtesy,
 Pilatë's voice he 'gan to cry,
 ore by armës, and by blood, and bones,
 a noble talë for the nones,⁹

hich I will now quite the Knightë's tale.’

Hostë saw that he was drunken of ale, 8130
 d; ‘Abide, Robin, my levë¹⁰ brother,
 etter man shall tell us first another:
 and let us worken thriftily.’

¹ Be re-
corded.

² Laughed.
³ So may I
prosper.

⁴ Know
how.
⁵ Requite.

⁶ With
difficulty
⁷ Would
not.
⁸ To let
down.

⁹ Occasion.

¹⁰ Dear.

	<p>‘ By Goddē’s soul (quod he) that will not I, 3134 For I will speak, or ellēs go my way.’</p>
¹ An oath of impatience.	<p>Our Hostē answer’d; ‘ Tell on a devil way,¹ Thou art a fool; thy wit is overcome.’</p>
	<p>‘ Now hearkeneth,’ quod the Miller ‘ all and some:</p>
	<p>But first I make a protestatioún, That I am drunk, I know it by my soun: 3140 And therefore if that I misspeak or say, Wite² it the ale of Southwark, I you pray:</p>
² Blame.	<p>For I will tell a legend and a life Both of a carpenter and of his wife, How that a clerk hath set the wrightē’s cap.³</p>
³ Made a fool of. ⁴ Talk.	<p>The Reevē answer’d and said, ‘ Stint thy clap,⁴ Let be thy lewēd drunken harlotry. It is a sin, and eke a great folly To apeiren⁵ any man, or him defame, And eke to bringen wives in such a name. 3150 Thou mayst enough of other thingēs sayn.’</p>
⁵ Detract from.	<p>This drunken Miller spake full soon again, And saidē; ‘ Levē brother, Osēwold, Who hath no wifē, he is no cuckōld. But I say not therefore that thou art one; There be full goodē wivēs many one. Why art thou angry with my talē now?</p>
⁶ Verily.	<p>I have a wife, pardie,⁶ as well as thou, Yet n’old I, for the oxen in my plough, Taken upon me morē than enough 3160 As deemen⁷ of myself that I am one; I will believen well that I am none. An husband should not be inquisitif Of Goddē’s privity, ne of his wife.</p>
⁷ Judge.	<p>So he may findēn Goddē’s foison⁸ there, Of the remnant needeth not to enquere.’</p>
⁸ Abundance.	

What should I morë say, but this Millére
 He n'old his wordës for no man forbear,
 But told his churlé's tale in his manére,
 Me thinketh, that I shall rehearse it here.

3167

And therefore every gentle wight I pray,
 For Goddë's love as deem not that I say
 Of evil intent, but that I must rehearse
 Their talës all, all be they better or wërse,
 Or ellës falsen¹ some of my mattére.
 And therefore whoso list it not to hear,
 Turn over the leaf, and choose another tale,
 For he shall find enough both great and smale,
 Of storial² thing that toucheth gentiless,
 And eke morality, and holiness.

3180

Blameth not me, if that ye choose amiss.
 The Miller is a churl, ye know well this,
 So was the Reevë, (and many other mo,)
 And harlotry³ they tolden bothë two.
 Aviseth⁴ you now, and put me out of blame;
 And eke men should not make earnest of game.⁵

¹ Falsify.² Histori-cal, true.³ Ribaldry.⁴ Look to your-selves.
⁵ Fun.

THE MILLER'S TALE.

WHILOM there was dwelling in Oxenford
 A nichë gnof,⁶ that guestës held to board,
 And of his craft he was a carpentér.

⁶ Miser.

With him there was dwelling a poor scholér,
 Had learned art, but all his fantasy
 Was turned for to learn astrology,
 And coude⁷ a certain of conclusions
 To deemen⁸ by interrogations,

3190

⁷ Knew.⁸ Judge.

If that men asked him in certain hours,
When that men should have drought or ellës
showers:

Or if men asked him what shoulde fall
Of every thing, I may not reckon all.

This clerk was cleded hendy¹ Nicholas;
Of dernë² love he coude³ and of solace;
And thereto he was sly and full privy,
And like a maiden meekë for to see.

A chamber had he in that hostelry
Alone, withouten any company,
Full fetisly⁴ ydight with herbës sote,⁵
And he himself was sweet as is the rote⁶

Of liquorice, or any setewale.⁷
His Almagest,⁸ and bookës great and smale,
His astrolabre,⁹ longing for his art,
His augrim stonës,¹⁰ layen fair apart
On shelvës couched at his bedde's head,
His press ycovered with a falding¹⁰ red.
And all above there lay a gay sautrie,¹¹
On which he made on nightës melody,
So sweetëly, that all the chamber rung:
And *Angelus ad virginem* he sung.

And after that he sung the kingë's note;
Full often blessed was his merry throat.
And thus this sweetë clerk his timë spent

After his friendës' finding¹² and his rent.

This carpenter had wedded new a wife,
Which that he loved morë than his life:
Of eighteen year she was I guess of age.
Jealous he was, and held her narrow in cage,
For she was wild and young, and he was old,
And deemed himself belike a cuckold.
He knew not Caton,¹³ for his wit was rude,

¹ Cour-
teous.
² Secret.
³ Knew.

⁴ Neatly.
⁵ Sweet.
⁶ Root.

⁷ Vale-
rian.

⁸ Techni-
cal terms
in mathe-
matics.

⁹ Numer-
ation-
counters.

¹⁰ Coarse
cloth.

¹¹ Musical
instru-
ment.

¹² Attend-
ing to.

¹³ Cato in
De Mo-
ribus.

3195

3200

3210

3220

made a man should wed his similitude. 3228
 houlden wedden after their estate,
 outh and eld is often at debate.
 then he was fallen in the snare,
 ust endure (as other folk) his care.
 r was this youngē wife, and therewithal
 y weasel her body gent and small.
 it¹ she weared, barred all of silk,
 m-cloth² eke as white as morrow milk
 her lendēs,³ full of many a gore.
 was her smock, and brouded⁴ all before
 kē behind on her collar about
 ll-black silk, within and eke without. 3240
 ipēs of her whitē volupere⁵
 of the same suit of her coller;
 llet broad of silk, and set full high:
 ikerly⁶ she had a likerous⁷ eye.
 mall ypullēd were her browēs two,
 hey were bent, and black as any sloe.
 as well morē blissful⁸ one to see
 is the newē perjenetē⁹ tree;
 ofter than the wool is of a wether.
 l by her girdle hung a purse of leather, 3250
 id with silk, and pearlēd with latoun.¹⁰
 this world to seeken up and down
 n'is no man so wise, that coudē thenche¹¹
 y a popelot,¹² or such a wench.
 righter was the shining of her hue,
 in the tower the noble¹³ yforged new.
 f her song, it was as loud and yern,¹⁴
 y swallow sitting on a bern.¹⁵
 to she couldē skip, and make a game,
 y kid or calf following his dame. 3260
 outh was sweet as braket¹⁶ or the methe,¹⁷

¹ Girdle.² Apron.³ Loina.⁴ Embroidered.⁵ Cap.⁶ Certainly.⁷ Lascivious.⁸ Pleasant.⁹ Pear.¹⁰ A mixed metal.¹¹ Resist.¹² Butter-fly.¹³ Coin.¹⁴ Brisk.¹⁵ Barn.¹⁶ A sweet drink.¹⁷ Mead.

	Or hoard of apples, laid in hay or heath. Wincing ¹ she was, as is a jolly colt, Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt. A brooch she bare upon her low collére, As broad as is the boss of a bucklére. Her shoon were laced on her leggës high; She was a primerole, ² a piggesnie, ³ For any lord to liggen ⁴ in his bed, Or yet for any good yeoman to wed.	3262
¹ Wanton.		
² Prim- rose.		
³ A term of en- dear- ment.		
⁴ Lie.	Now, sir, and eft ⁵ sir, so befell the case, That on a day this hendy ⁶ Nicholas	
⁵ Again.	Fell with this youngë wife to rage ⁷ and play,	
⁶ Courte- ous.	While that her husband was at Oseney, As clerkës be full subtle and full quaint.	
⁷ Toy.	And privily he caught her by the queint, And said; ‘Ywis, ⁸ but if I have my will, For dernë ⁹ love of thee, leman, I kill.’	
⁸ Certain- ly.	And heldë her fast by the hanchë bones, And said; ‘Leman, lovë me well at once, Or I will dien, all so God me save.’	
⁹ Secret.		3280
	And she sprang as a colt doth in the trave: [*] And with her head she writhed fast away, And said; ‘I will not kiss thee, by my fay. ¹⁰ Why let be, (quod she) let be, Nicholas, Or I will cry out harrow and alas. Do way your handës, for your courtesy.’	
¹⁰ Faith.	This Nicholas 'gan mercy for to cry, And spake so fair, and proffer'd him so fast, That she her love him granted at the last, And swore her oath by Saint Thomas of Kent, That she would be at his commandement, When that she may her leisure well espy. ‘My husband is so full of jealousy,	3290

* ‘Trave:’ a frame in which horses were put to be shod.

That but ye waiten well, and be privy, I wot right well I n'am but dead,' quod she. • Ye musten be full derne ¹ as in this case.' 'Nay, thereof care you not,' quod Nicholas: • A clerk had litherly ² beset ³ his while, But if he could a carpenter beguile.'	3295	¹ Secret. ² Very ill. ³ Employ-ed.
And thus they were accorded and ysworn To wait a time, as I have said beforne. When Nicholas had done thus every deal, ⁴ And thwacked her about the lendës well, He kiss'd her sweet, and taketh his sautrie, ⁵ And playeth fast, and maketh melody.	3300	⁴ Whit. ⁵ Psaltery.
Then fell it thus, that to the parish cherche (Of Christë's owen workës for to werche ⁶) This good wife went upon a holy day: Her forehead shone as bright as any day, So was it washen, when she let ⁷ her werk.	3310	⁶ Work. ⁷ Left.
Now was there of that church a parish clerk, The which that was ycleped Absolon. Curl'd was his hair, and as the gold it shone, And strutted as a fannë large and broad; Full straight and even lay his jolly shode. ⁸		⁸ Hair.
His rode ⁹ was red, his eyen grey as goose, With Paulë's windows corven on his shoes. In hosen red he went full fetisly. ¹⁰		⁹ Complex-ion.
Yclad he was full small and properly, All in a kirtle of a light waget; Full fair and thickë been the pointës set. And thereupon he had a gay surplice, As white as is the blossom upon the rise. ¹¹	3320	¹⁰ Neatly. ¹¹ Bush.
A merry child he was, so God me save; Well could he letten blood, and clip, and shave, And make a charter of land, and a quittance. In twenty manner could he trip and dance,		

¹ Then.	(After the school of Oxenfordë tho ¹)	3329
² Rebeck.	And with his leggës casten to and fro; And playen songës on a small ribible, ² Thereto he sung sometime a loud quinible.*	
³ Guitar.	And as well could he play on a gitern. ³ In all the town n'as brewhouse ne tavern,	
⁴ Mirth.	That he ne visited with his solas, ⁴ There as that any gaillard tapster was. But sooth to say he was somedeal squaimous Of farting, and of speechë dangerous.	
	This Absolon, that jolly was and gay, Go'th with a censer on the holy day, Censing the wivës of the parish fast; And many a lovely look he on them cast, And namely on this carpenter's wife : To look on her him thought a merry life. She was so proper, and sweet, and likerous. I dare well say, if she had been a mouse, And he a cat, he would her hent ⁵ anon.	3340
^{• Seized.}	This parish clerk, this jolly Absolon, Hath in his heartë such a love-longing, That of no wife took he none offering; For courtesy, he said, he n'oldë ⁶ none.	3350
^{• Would not.}	The moon at night full clear and brightë shone, And Absolon his gitern hath ytake, For paramours he thoughtë for to wake.	
⁷ Joyous.	And forth he go'th, jolif ⁷ and amorous, Till he came to the carpenterë's house, A little after the cockës had ycrow, And dressed him up by a shot ⁸ window,	
⁸ Project-ing.	That was upon the carpenterë's wall. He singeth in his voice gentle and small; 'Now, dearë lady,—if thy willë be,	3360
	* 'Quinible:' a musical instrument, otherwise Quinterna and Quintana.	

I pray you that ye—will ruë¹ on me ;'
Full well accordant to his giterning.

3362 ¹ Have
pity.

This carpenter awoke, and heard him sing,
And spake unto his wife, and said anon,
‘What, Alison, hears thou not Absolon,
That chanteth thus under our bowerë's² wall?’
And she answer'd her husband therewithal ;
‘Yes, God wot, John, I hear him every deal.’

² Cham-
ber.

This passeth forth ; what will ye bet³ than
well ?

3370 ³ Better.

From day to day this jolly Absolon
So loveth her, that him is woe-begone.
He waketh all the night, and all the day,
He combeth his locks broad, and made him gay.
He wooeth her by meanës⁴ and brocage,⁵
And sworë he would be her owen page.
He singeth brokking⁶ as a nightingale.
He sent her pinnës, mead, and spiced ale,
And wafers piping hot out of the glede :⁷
And for she was of town, he proffer'd meed.
For some folk will be wonnen for richess,
And some for strokes, and some with gentilless.

⁴ Instru-
ments.
⁵ Agency.
⁶ Quaver-
ing.

⁷ Coal

Sometime to shew his lightness and mast'ry
He playeth Herod on a scaffold high.
But what availeth him as in this case ?
So loveth she this hendy⁸ Nicholas,
That Absolon may blow the buckë's horn :
He ne had for his labour but a scorn.
And thus she maketh Absolon her ape,
And all his earnest turneth to a jape.⁹
Full sooth is this proverb, it is no lie ;
Men say right thus alway ; the nighë sly¹⁰
Maketh oft time the far lief¹¹ to be loth.¹²
For though that Absolon be wood¹³ or wroth,

⁸ Courte-
ous.

⁹ Jest.

¹⁰ Cun-
ning.
¹¹ Pleas-
ing.
¹² Odious.
¹³ Furious.

	Because that he far was from herë sight, This nighë Nicholas stood in his light. Now bear thee well, thou hendy Nicholas, For Absolon may wail and sing ‘Alas!’ And so befell that on a Saturday, This carpenter was gone to Osenay, And hendy Nicholas and Alison Accorded been to this conclusion, That Nicholas shall shapen ¹ him a wile This silly jealous husband to beguile; And if so were the gamë went aright, She should sleep in his armës allë night, For this was her desire and his also. And right anon, withouten wordës mo, This Nicholas no longer woulde tarry, But doth full soft unto his chamber carry Both meat and drinkë for a day or tway.	3395 3400 3410
¹ Devise.	And to her husband bade her for to say, If that he asked after Nicholas, She shouldë say, she n’ist ² not where he was ; Of all the day she saw him not with eye. She trowed he was in some malady, For for no cry her maiden could him call He n’old ³ answer, for nothing that might fall.	3420
² Knew not.	Thus passeth forth all thilkë ⁴ Saturday, That Nicholas still in his chamber lay, And ate, and slept, and didë what him list Till Sunday, that the sunnë go’t to rest.	
³ Would not.	This silly carpenter hath great marvail Of Nicholas, or what thing might him ail, And said; ‘I am adrad, ⁵ by Saint Thomas, It standeth not aright with Nicholas: God shieldë that he died suddenly. This world is now full tickle ⁶ sikerly. ⁷	
⁴ That.		
⁵ Afraid.		
⁶ Uncer- tain.		
⁷ Certain- ly.		

I saw to-day a corpse yborne to cherch,
That now on Monday last I saw him werche.¹

3429

¹ Work.

'Go up (quod he unto his knave) anon;
Clepe² at his door, or knockë with a stone:
Look how it is, and tell me boldëly.'

² Call.

This knavë go'th him up full sturdily,
And at the chamber door while that he stood,
He cried and knocked as that he were wood:³
'What how? what do ye, Master Nicholay?
How may ye sleepen all the longë day?'
But all for nought, he heardë not a word.
An hole he found full low upon the board,
There⁴ as the cat was wont in for to creep,
And at that hole he looked in full deep,
And at the last he had of him a sight.

3440

³ Mad.

This Nicholas sat ever gaping upright,
As he had kyked⁵ on the newë moon.

⁴ Where.

Adown he go'th, and telleth his master soon,
In what array he saw this ilkë⁶ man.

⁵ Same.

This carpenter to blissen⁷ him began,
And said; 'Now help us, Saintë Frideswide.
A man wot little what shall him betide.
This man is fallen with his astronomy
In some woodness⁸ or in some agony.

3450

⁶ Madness.

I thought aye well how that it shouldë be.
Men should not know of Goddë's privity.

Yea, blessed be alway a lewed⁹ man,
That nought but only his believë¹⁰ can.¹¹
So fared another clerk with astronomy;
He walked in the fieldës for to pry
Upon the starrës, what there should befall,
Till he was in a marlëpit yfall.

3460

⁷ Ignorant.⁸ Creed.⁹ Known.

He saw not that. But yet, by Saint Thomas,
Me rueth sore of hendy Nicholas:

	He shall be rated of his studying, If that I may, by Jesus heaven king.	3463
¹ Use it as a lever.	‘Get me a staff, that I may underspore ¹ While that thou, Robin, heavest off the door: He shall out of his studying, as I guess.’	
² Apply.	And to the chamber door he ’gan him dress. ²	
³ Occasion.	His knavë was a strong carl for the nones, ³	
⁴ Hinge.	And by the hasp ⁴ he heav’d it off at once; Into the floor the doorë fell anon.	3470
	This Nicholas sat aye as still as stone, And ever he gaped upward into the air.	
⁵ Thought.	This carpenter wend ⁵ he were in despair,	
⁶ Took.	And hent ⁶ him by the shoulders mightily,	
⁷ Angrily.	And shook him hard, and cried spitously; ⁷	
	‘What, Nicholas? what how, man? look adown: Awake, and think on Christë’s passioún.	
⁸ Sign with the Cross.	I crouchë ⁸ thee from elvës, and from wights.’	
⁹ In pro- per form.	Therewith the night-spell said he anon ⁹ rights,	3480
¹⁰ Dwellest.	On fourë halvës of the house about, And on the threshold of the door without.	
	‘Jesu Christ, and Saint Benedight, Bless this house from every wicked wight, From the nightës mare, the wite Pater-noster;	
	Where wonnest ¹⁰ thou, Saint Peter’s sister?’	
	And at the last this hendy Nicholas	
¹¹ Sigh.	’Gan for to siken ¹¹ sore, and said; ‘Alas! Shall all the world be lost eftsoonës now?’	
¹² Labour.	This carpenter answer’d; ‘What sayest thou? 3490 What? think on God, as we do, men that swink.’ ¹²	
	This Nicholas answered; ‘Fetch me a drink; And after will I speak in privity Of certain thing that toucheth thee and me: I will tell it none other man certain.’	
	This carpenter go’th down, and cometh again,	

And brought of mighty ale a largë quart ;	3497	
And when that each of them had drunken his part,		
This Nicholas his doorë fastë shet, ¹		¹ Shut.
And down the carpenter by him he set,		
And saidë ; ‘ John, mine hostë lief ² and dear,		² Beloved.
Thou shalt upon thy truth swearë me here,		
That to no wight thou shalt my counsel wray : ³		³ Betray.
For it is Christë's counsel that I say,		
And if thou tell it, man, thou art forlore : ⁴		⁴ Lost.
For this vengeance thou shalt have therefore,		
That if thou wrayë me, thou shalt be wood.’ ⁵		⁵ Mad.
‘ Nay, Christ forbid it for his holy blood,’		
Quoth then this silly man ; ‘ I am no labbe, ⁶		⁶ Talker.
Ne though I say it, I n'am not lief ⁷ to gab.	3510	⁷ Fond.
Say what thou wilt, I shall it never tell		
To child ne wife, by him that harrow'd ⁸ hell.’		⁸ Sub-dued.
‘ Now, John, (quod Nicholas) I will not lie,		
I have yfound in mine astrology,		
As I have looked in the moonë bright,		
That now on Monday next, at quarter night,		
Shall fall a rain, and that so wild and wood ⁹		⁹ Furious.
That half so great was never Noe's flood.		
This world (he said) in less than in an hour		
Shall all be dreint, ¹⁰ so hideous is the shower :	3520	¹⁰ Drown-ed.
Thus shall mankindë drench, ¹¹ and lose their life.’		¹¹ Drown.
This carpenter answer'd ; ‘ Alas, my wife !		
And shall she drench ? alas, mine Alisoun !’		
For sorrow of this he fell almost adown,		
And said ; ‘ Is there no remedy in this case ?’		
‘ Why, yes, for God,’ quoth hendy Nicholas ;		
If thou wilt worken after lore ¹² and rede ; ¹³		¹² Learn-ing.
Thou mayst not worken after thine own head.		¹³ Advice.
For thus saith Solomon, that was full true ;		
Work all by counsel, and thou shalt not rue.	3530	

And if thou worken wilt by good counsel,
I undertake, withouten mast or sail,
Yet shall I saven her, and thee and me.
Hast thou not heard how saved was Noe,
When that our Lord had warned him beforne,
That all the world with water should be lorne?¹

3531

¹ Lost.² Quoth.³ Long
ago.

'Yes, (quod² this carpenter) full yore ago.'³

'Hast thou not heard (quod Nicholas) also

The sorrow of Noe with his fellowship,
Ere that he might get his wife to ship ?

3540

⁴ Rather.⁵ That.⁶ A dis-
abled
ram.⁷ Knowest.

Him had be lever,⁴ I dare well undertake,

At thilkë⁵ time, than all his wethers⁶ black,

That she had had a ship herself alone.

And therefore wost⁷ thou what is best to done ?

This asketh haste, and of an hasty thing

Men may not preach and maken tarrying.

Anon go get us fast into this inn⁸

⁸ House.⁹ Tub.

A kneading trough or else a kemelin,⁹

For each of us ; but look that they be large,

In which we mowen¹⁰ swim as in a barge:

3550

And have therein vitaillë suffisant

But for a day; fie on the remenant;

¹⁰ May.

The water shall aslake¹¹ and go away

Abouten prime upon the nextë day.

¹¹ Abate.

But Robin may not wete¹² of this, thy knave,¹³

¹² Know.¹³ Servant.

Ne eke thy maiden Gill I may not save:

Axë not why: for though thou axë me,

I will not tellen Goddë's privity.

Sufficeth thee, but¹⁴ if thy wittës mad,¹⁵

¹⁴ Unless.¹⁵ Are gone
mad.

To have as great a grace as Noe had,

Thy wife shall I well saven out of doubt.

Go now thy way, and speed thee hereabout.

'But when thou hast for her, and thee, and me,

Ygotten us these kneading tubbës three,

3560

Then shalt thou hang them in the roof full high,
 That no man of our purveyance espy: 3566
 And when thou hast done thus as I have said,
 And hast our vitaille fair in them ylaid,
 And eke an axe to smite the cord a-two
 When that the water cometh, that we may go, 3570
 And break an hole on high upon the gable
 Unto the garden-ward, over the stable,
 That we may freely passen forth our way,
 When that the greatë shower is gone away.
 Then shalt thou swim as merry, I undertake,
 As doth the whitë duck after her drake :
 Then will I clepe,¹ ‘ How, Alison ? how, John ? 1 Call.
 Be merry: for the flood will pass anon.’
 And thou wilt say, ‘ Hail, Master Nicholay,
 Good-morrow, I see thee well, for it is day.’ 3580
 And then shall we be lordës all our life
 Of all the world, as Noe and his wife.
 But of one thing I warnë thee full right,
 Be well avised on that ilkë² night, 2 Same.
 That we been enter'd into shippës board,
 That none of us ne speakë not one word,
 Ne clepe ne cry, but be in his prayére,
 For it is Godde's owen hestë³ dear. 3 Com-
 mand.

Thy wife and thou must hangen far a-twin,
 For that betwixen you shall be no sin, 3590
 No more in looking than there shall in deed.
 This ordinance is said; go, God thee speed.
 To-morrow at night, when men be all asleep,
 Into our kneading tubbës will we creep,
 And sitten there, abiding Godde's grace.
 Go now thy way, I have no longer space
 To make of this no longer sermoning :
 Men say thus: Send⁴ the wise, and say nothing:

⁴ Sandeth.

Thou art so wise, it needeth thee nought teach. 3599
 Go, save our lives, and that I thee beseech.'

This silly carpenter go'th forth his way,
 Full oft he said, Alas! and Wala wa!
 And to his wife he told his privity,
 And she was ware, and knew it bet¹ than he
 What all this quaintë cast² was for to say.
 But natheless she fear'd as she would dey,³
 And said; 'Alas! go forth thy way anon.
 Help us to 'scape, or we be dead each one.
 I am thy trüe very wedded wife;
 Go, dearë spouse, and help to save our life.' 3610

Lo, what a great thing is affectiōn,

Men may die of imaginaciōn,

So deepē may impressiōn be take.

This silly carpenter beginneth quake:

Him thinketh verily that he may see

Noe's flood comen wallowing as the sea

To drenchen⁴ Alison, his honey dear.

He weepeth, waileth, maketh sorry cheer;

He sigheth, with full many a sorry sough.⁵

He go'th, and getteth him a kneading trough,

3620

And after a tub, and a kemelin,⁶

And privily he sent them to his inn:⁷

And hung them in the roof in privity.

His owen hand then made he ladders three,

To climben by the ranges and the stalks;⁸

Unto the tubbës hanging in the balks;⁹

And victualled both kem'lin, trough, and tub,

With bread and cheese, and good ale in a jubbe,¹⁰

Sufficing right enough as for a day.

But ere that he had made all this array,

3630

He sent his knave,¹¹ and eke his wench also

Upon his need to London for to go.

¹ Better.

² Contriv-
ance.

³ Dia.

⁴ Drown.

⁵ Sound.

⁶ Kind of
tub.
⁷ Dwelling.

⁸ Sides of
a ladder.
⁹ Joista.

¹⁰ Vessel.

¹¹ Servant.

And on the Monday, when it drew to night,
He shut his door, withouten candle light,
And dressed all thing as it shouldē be.

3633

And shortly up they clomben allē three.
They sitten stillē well a furlong way.
Now, *Pater noster*, clum,* said Nicholay,

And clum, quod John, and clum, said Alison :
This carpenter said his devotión,
And still he sit, and biddeth his prayére,
Awaiting on the rain, if he it hear.

3640

The deade sleep, for weary business,
Fell on this carpenter, right as I guess,
Abouten curfew-time, or little more.

For travail of his ghost¹ he groaneth sore,
And eft² he routeth,³ for his head mislay.⁴

Down of the ladder stalketh Nicholay,
And Alison full soft adown her sped.

Withouten wordēs more they went to bed,
There⁵ as the carpenter was wont to lie ;

3650

There was the revel, and the melody.

And thus li'th Alison, and Nicholas,
In business of mirth and in solas,
Till that the bell of *laudes* 'gan to ring,⁶
And friars in the chancel went to sing.

¹ Spirit.² Again.³ Snores.⁴ Lay

awry.

⁵ Where.⁶ Matins,
at three,
morning.

This parish clerk, this amorous Absolon,
That is for love alway so woe-begone,

Upon the Monday was at Osenay

With company, him to disport and play ;

3660

And asked upon cas⁷ a cloisterer

Full privily after John the carpenter ;

And he drew him apart out of the chirche.

He said, 'I n'ot ;⁸ I saw him not here wirche⁹
Since Saturday ; I trow that he be went

⁷ By
chance.⁸ Know
not.⁹ Work.

* 'Clum': the humming sound made in repeating prayers.

	For timber, there our abbot hath him sent. For he is wont for timber for to go, And dwellen at the Grange a day or two : Or ellës he is at his house certain. Where that he be, I cannot soothly sayn.' This Absolon full jolly was and light, And thoughtë, ' Now is time to wake all night, For sikerly, ¹ I saw him not stirring About his door, since day began to spring. So may I thrive, I shall at cockë's crow Full privily go knock at his window, That stands full low upon his bower's ² wall : To Alison will I now tellen all My love-longing ; for yet I shall not miss, That at the leastë way I shall her kiss. Some manner comfort shall I have parfay, ³ My mouth hath itched all this longë day : That is a sign of kissing at the least. All night me mette ⁴ eke, I was at a feast. Therefore I will go sleep an hour or tway, And all the night then will I wake and play.'	3666 3670
¹ Certainly.		
² Chamber.		
³ By my faith.		
⁴ Dreamed.		
⁵ With great exactness.	When that the firstë cock hath crow'd, anon Up rose this jolly lover Absolon, And him arrayeth gay, at point devise. ⁵ But first he cheweth grain ⁶ and liquorice, To smellen sweet, ere he had spoke with her.	3690
⁶ Kind of spice.		
⁷ A species of herb.		
⁸ Thought.	Under his tongue a trüe love ⁷ he bare, For thereby wend ⁸ he to be gracious. He cometh to the carpenterë's house, And still he stands under the shot window ; Unto his breast it raught, ⁹ it was so low ; And soft he cougheth with a semisoún. ¹⁰	
⁹ Reached.	' What do ye, honeycomb, sweet Alison ! My fairë bird, my sweet cinnamomë, ¹¹	
¹⁰ Low tone.		
¹¹ Cinnamon.		

Awaketh,¹ leman mine, and speakéth² to me.
 Full little thinken ye upon my woe,
 That for your love I sweat there as I go.
 No wonder is though that I swelt³ and sweat.
 I mourn as doth a lamb after the teat.
 Ywis,⁴ leman, I have such love-longing,
 That like a turtle true is my mourning.
 I may not eatē no more than a maid.'

3700 ¹ Awake.² Speak.³ Faint.⁴ Certainly.

' Go from the window, jackē fool,' she said:
 ' As help me God, it will not be, compame.⁵
 I love another, or else I were to blame,
 Well bet⁶ than thee by Jesu, Absolon.
 Go forth thy way, or I will cast a stone;
 And let me sleep; a twenty devil way.'⁷

3710 ⁵ Companion.⁶ Better.⁷ A hasty oath.

' Alas! (quod Absolon) and wala wa!
 That true love was ever so evil beset:
 Then kiss me, since that it may be no bet,
 For Jesus' love, and for the love of me.'

' Wilt thou then go thy way therewith?' quod
 she.

' Yea, certes, leman,' quod this Absolon.

' Then make thee ready, (quod she) I come anon.'

This Absolon down set him on his knees, 3721
 And said; ' I am a lord at all degrees:
 For after this I hope there cometh more;
 Leman, thy grace, and, sweetē bird, thine ore.'⁸

⁸ Favour.

The window she undo'th; and that in haste.

' Have done, (quod she) come off, and speed thee
 fast,

Lest that our neighebourēs thee espy.'

This Absolon 'gan wipe his mouth full dry.

Dark was the night, as pitch or as the coal,

And at the window she put out her hole,

And Absolon him fell⁹ ne bet ne warse,

3730

⁹ Felt.

But with his mouth he kiss'd her naked erse
Full savourly, ere he was 'ware of this.

3732

Aback he start, and thought it was amiss,
For well he wist a woman hath no beard.
He felt a thing all rough, and long yhair'd,
And saidë; 'Fy, alas! what have I do?'

'Te he!' quoth she, and clapt the window to;
And Absolon go'th forth a sorry pace.

'A beard, a beard,' said hendy Nicholas;
'By Godde's *corpus*, this go'th fair and well.'

3740

This silly Absolon heard every deal,
And on his lip he 'gan for anger bite;
And to himself he said, I shall thee quite.¹
Who rubbeth now, who frotteth² now his lips
With dust, with sand, with straw, with cloth, with
chips,

¹ Requite.² Same as
rub.

But Absolon? that saith full oft, 'Alas!
My soul betake I unto Sathanas,

³ Rather.⁴ Reveng-

ed.

⁵ Started

aside.

⁶ Quench-

ed.

⁷ Cared.⁸ Rush.⁹ Beaten.¹⁰ Master.

But me were lever³ than all this town (quod he)
Of this despite awroken⁴ for to be.

3750

Alas! alas! that I ne had yblent.⁵

His hotë love is cold, and all yquent.⁶

For from that time that he had kiss'd her erse,

Of paramours ne raught⁷ he not a kers,⁸

For he was healed of his malady;

Full often paramours he 'gan defy,

And weep as doth a child that is ybete.⁹

A softë pace he went him over the street

Unto a smith, men callen Dan¹⁰ Gerveis,

That in his forgë smithed plough-harnéss;

3760

He sharppeth share and coulter busily.

This Absolon knocketh all easily,

And said; 'Undo, Gerveis, and that anon.'

'What, who art thou?' 'It am I Absolon.'

t? Absolon, what? Christë's sweetë tree,	3765	
e ye so rath? ¹ hey! <i>benedicite</i> ,		¹ Early.
leth you? some gay girl, God it wote,		
ought you thus upon the virëtote: ²		² Wander-
t Neote, ye wot well what I mean.'		ing.
Absolon ne raughtë ³ not a bean	3770	³ Cared.
is play; no word again he yaf. ⁴		⁴ Gave.
de morë tow on his distaff		
erveis knew, and saidë; 'Friend so dear,		
te coulter in the chimney here		
it me, I have therewith to don:		
bring again to thee full soon.'		
is answered; 'Certes, were it gold,		
pokë nobles all untold,		
ouldst it have, as I am truë smith.		
Christë's foot, what will ye do therewith?		
f, quod Absolon, 'be as be may;	3781	
well tellen thee another day:'		
ight the coulter by the coldë steel.		
t out at the door he 'gan to steal,		
nt into the carpenterë's wall.		
ghed first, and knocked therewithal		
ie window, right as he did ere.		
Alison answered; 'Who is there		
ocketh so? I warrant him a thief.'		
, nay, (quod he) God wot, my sweetë lefe, ⁵		
ine Absolon, thy dearëling.	3791	⁵ Dear.
(quod he) I have thee brought a ring,		
her gave it me, so God me save,		
e it is, and thereto well ygrave:		
il I given thee, if thou me kiss.'		
Nicholas was risen for to piss,		
ought he would amenden all the jape, ⁶		
ildë kiss his erse ere that he 'scape:		⁶ Jest.

And up the window did he hastily,
And out his erse he putteth privily
Over the buttock, to the haunchë bone.
And therewith spake this clerk, this Absolon,
‘Speak, sweetë bird, I n’ot¹ not where thou art.’
This Nicholas anon let flee a fart,
As great as it had been a thunder dint,
That with the stroke he was well nigh yblint:²
And he was ready with his iron hot,
And Nicholas amid the erse he smote.
Off go’t the skin an handbreadth all about.
The hotë coulter burned so his tout,
That for the smart he weened for to die;
As he were wood, for woe he ‘gan to cry,
‘Help! water, water, help for Goddë’s heart!’
This carpenter out of his slumber start,
And heard one cry ‘Watér,’ as he were wood,
And thought, Alas! now cometh Noe’s flood.
He set him up withouten wordës mo,
And with his axe he smote the cord a-two;
And down go’t all; he fond neither to sell
Ne bread ne ale, till he came to the sell,
Upon the floor, and there aswoon he lay.
Up starten Alison and Nicholay,
And crieden, ‘Out and harow!’ in the street.
The neighëbourës bothë small and great
In rannen, for to gauren³ on this man,
That yet aswoonë lay, both pale and wan:
For with the fall he broken hath his arm.
But standen he must unto his owen harm,
For when he spake, he was anon bore down
With hendy Nicholas and Alisoún.
They tolden every man that he was wood;
He was aghastë so of Noe’s flood

¹ Know not.² Blinded.³ Stare.

3799

3810

3820

3830

Through phantasy, that of his vanity
He had ybought him kneading tubbës three,
And had them hanged in the roof above;
And that he prayed them for Godde's love
To sitten in the roof *par compagnie*.

3833

The folk 'gan laughen at his phantasy.
Into the roof they kyken,¹ and they gape,
And turned all his harm into a jape.
For whatso that this carpenter answ'r'd,
It was for nought, no man his reason heard.
With oathës great he was so sworn adown,
That he was holden wood in all the town.
For everich clerk anon right held with other;
They said, 'The man was wood, my levë² brother;'
And every wight 'gan laughen at this strife.

¹ Look.

3840

² Dear.

Thus swived was the carpenterë's wife,
For all his keeping, and his jealousy;
And Absolon hath kiss'd her nether eye;
And Nicholas is scalded in the tout.
This tale is done, and God save all the rout.

3850

THE REEVE'S PROLOGUE.

WHEN folk have laughed at this nicē case 3853
 Of Absolon and hendi Nicholas,
 Diversō folk diversēly they said,
 But for the morē part they laugh'd and play'd ;
 Ne at this tale I saw no man him grieve,
 But it were only Osēwold the Reeve.
 Because he was of carpenterē's craft,
 A little ire is in his heart ylaft;¹ 3860
 He 'gan to grutch² and blamen it a lite.³
 'So the⁴ I,' quod he, 'full well could I him quite
 With blearing of a proudē miller's eye,
 If that me list to speak of ribaldry.
 But I am old; me list not play for age;
 Grass time is done, my fodder is now forāge.
 This whitē top writeth mine oldē years;
 Mine heart is also mouled⁵ as mine hairs;
 But if I fare as doth an open-ers;⁶
 That ilk⁷ fruit is ever longer the wersē, 3870
 Till it be rotten in mullok,⁸ or in stre.⁹
 We oldē men, I dread, so faren we,
 Till we be rotten, can we not be ripe;
 We hoppe¹⁰ alway, while that the world will pipe;
 For in our will there sticketh ever a nail,

¹ Left.² Murmur.³ Little.⁴ Thrive.⁵ Grown mouldy.⁶ Fruit of the medlar tree.⁷ Same.⁸ Dung.⁹ Straw.¹⁰ Dance.

To have an hoarë head and a green tail, As hath a leek; for though our might be gone, Our will desireth folly ever in on: ¹ For when we may not do, then will we speaken, Yet in our ashes cold is fire yreeken. ²	3876	¹ Continually. ² Smoking. ³ Sparks of fire. ⁴ Boasting. ⁵ Unwieldy. ⁶ Hence. ⁷ Run. ⁸ Certainly. ⁹ Part of a barrel. ¹⁰ Cobbler. ¹¹ Doctor.
Four gledës ³ have we, which I shall devise, Avaunting, ⁴ lying, anger, and covetise. These fourë sparkës 'longen unto eld. Our oldë limbës may well be unweld, ⁵ But will ne shall not faillen, that is sooth.	3880	
And yet have I alway a coltë's tooth, As many a year as it is passed henne, ⁶ Since that my tap of life began to renne. ⁷ For sikerly, ⁸ when I was born, anon Death drew the tap of life, and let it gon:	3890	
And ever since hath so the tap yrun, Till that almost all empty is the tun. The stream of life now droppeth on the chimbe. ⁹ The silly tonguë may well ring and chime Of wretchedness, that passed is full yore: With oldë folk, save dotage, is no more.'		
When that our Host had heard this ser- moning, He 'gan to speak as lordly as a king, And saidë; ' What amounteth all this wit? What? shall we speak all day of holy writ?	3900	
The devil made a Reeve for to preach, Or of a souter ¹⁰ a shipman, or a leach. ¹¹		
' Say forth thy tale, and tarry not the time: Lo Depeford, and it is half way prime: Lo Greenwich, there many a shrew is in. It were all time thy talë to begin.'		
' Now, sirs,' quod this Osëwold the Reeve, ' I pray you allë, that ye not you grieve,		

¹ Some-
what.
² Hood.

Though I answér, and somedeal¹ set his hove,² 3909

For lawful is with force force off to shove.

‘This drunken Miller hath ytold us here,
How that beguiled was a carpentére,
Paráventure in scorn, for I am one:
And by your leave, I shall him quit anon.
Right in his churlé’s termës will I speak.
I pray to God his neckë might to-break.
He can well in mine eyë see a stalk,
But in his own he cannot see a balk.’³

³ Beam.

⁴ Cam-
bridge.

At Trompington, not far from Cantebrig.⁴

3920

There go’th a brook, and over that a brig,

⁵ Mill.

Upon the whichë brook there stood a melle:⁵

⁶ Prepare.
⁷ Shoot.

And this is very sooth, that I you tell.

⁸ A wea-
pon of
offence.
⁹ Bodkin.

A miller was there dwelling many a day,

As any peacock he was proud and gay:

Pipen he could, and fish, and nettës bete,⁶

And turnen cups, and wrestlen well, and shete.⁷

Aye by his belt he bare a long pavade,⁸

And of a sword full trenchant was the blade.

A jolly popper⁹ bare he in his pouch;

There n’as no man for peril durst him touch.

¹⁰ Flat.
¹¹ Bald.
¹² A swag-
gerer in
the mar-
ket.
¹³ Lay.
¹⁴ Suffer
for.

A Sheffield whittle bare he in his hose.

Round was his face, and camuse¹⁰ was his nose.

As pilled¹¹ as an apë was his skull.

He was a market-beter¹² at the full.

There durstë no wight hand upon him legge,¹³

That he ne swore he should anon abegge.¹⁴

A thief he was forsooth, of corn and meal,
And that a sly, and usant¹ for to steal.
His name was hoten² deinous³ Simekin.
A wife he had, comen of noble kin:
The parson of the town her father was.
With her he gave full many a pan of brass,
For that Simkin should in his blood ally.
She was yfoster'd in a nunnery:
For Simkin would no wifē, as he said,
But she were well ynourished, and a maid,
To saven his estate of yeomanry:
And she was proud, and pert as is a pie.
A full fair sight was it uperr them two.
On holy days before her would he go
With his tippét ybound about his head;
And she came after in a gite⁴ of red,
And Simkin haddē hosen of the same.
There durstē no wight clepen⁵ her but dame:
Was none so hardy, that went by the way,
That with her durstē rage or onës play,
But if he would be slain by Simekin
With pavade, or with knife, or bodēkin.
(For jealous folk be per'lous evermo:
Algatē⁶ they would their wivës wenden so.)
And eke for she was somedeal smoterlich,⁷
She was as digne⁸ as water in a ditch,
And all so full of hoker,⁹ and of bismare.¹⁰
Her thoughtē that a lady should her spare,
What for her kindred, and her nortelrie,¹¹
That she had learned in the nunnery.
A daughter hadden they betwixt them two
Of twenty year, withouten any mo,
Saving a child that was of half year age,
In cradle it lay, and was a proper page.¹²

3937

¹ Accus-
tomed.
² Called.
³ Disdain-
ful.

3950

⁴ Gown.⁵ Call.

3960

⁶ Always.⁷ Dirty.⁸ Worthy.⁹ Forward-
ness.¹⁰ Abusive

speech.

¹¹ Educa-
tion.

3970

¹² Boy.

¹ Flat.	This wenchë thick and well ygrownen was, With camuse ¹ nose, and eyen gray as glass; With buttocks broad, and breastës round and high; But right fair was her hair, I will not lie.	3971
² Because.	The parson of the town, for ² she was fair, In purpose was to maken her his heir Both of his chattels, and of his messuage, And strange ³ he made it of her marriáge. His purpose was for to bestow her high Into some worthy blood of ancestry.	3980
³ Matter of difficulty.	For holy Church's good may be dispended On holy Church's blood that is descended. Therefore he would his holy-blood honoúr, Though that he holy Churchë should devour.	
⁴ Toll.	Great soken ⁴ hath this miller out of doubt With wheat and malt, of all the land about; And namely there was a great collége Men clepe ⁵ the Soler hall at Cantebrege, ⁶	
⁵ Call. ⁶ Cambridge.	There was their wheat and eke their malt yground. And on a day it happed in a stound, ⁷ Sick lay the manciple ⁸ on a malady,	3990
⁷ On a sudden. ⁸ Steward.	Men wenden ⁹ wisly ¹⁰ that he shouldë die. For which this miller stole both meal and corn An hundred timës morë than beforne.	
⁹ Thought. ¹⁰ Certainly.	For therebeforn he stole but courteously, But now he was a thief outrageously. For which the warden chiddë and made fare, ¹¹	
¹¹ Ado.	But thereof set the miller not a tare; He craked ¹² boast, and swore it n'as not so. Then were there youngë poorë scholars two,	4000
¹² Talked.	That dwelten in the hall of which I say; Testif ¹³ they were, and lusty for to play; And only for their mirth and revelry	
¹³ Head-strong.	Upon the warden busily they cry,	

To give them leavē but a little stound,¹
 To go to mill, and see their corn yground:
 And hardly they dursten lay their neck,
 The miller should not steal them half a peck
 Of corn by sleightē, ne by force them reave.

4005

¹ Short space.

And at the last the warden gave them leave: 4010
 John hight that one, and Alein hight that other,
 Of one town were they born, that hight Strother,
 Far in the North, I can not tellen where.

This Alein maketh ready all his gear,
 And on a horse the sack he cast anon:
 Forth go'th Alein the clerk, and also John,
 With good sword and with buckler by their side.
 John knew the way, him needed not no guide,
 And at the mill the sack adown he lay'th.

Alein spake first; 'All hail, Simond, in faith, 4020
 How fares thy fairē daughter, and thy wife?'

'Alein, welcome (quod Simkin) by my life,
 And John also: how now, what do ye here?'

'By God, Simond, (quod John) need has no peer.²
 Him behoves serve himself that has no swain,³
 Or else he is a fool, as clerkēs sayn.
 Our manciple I hope⁴ he will be dead,
 So workēs aye the wangēs⁵ in his head:
 And therefore is I come, and eke Alein,
 To grind our corn and carry it home again: 4030
 I pray you speed us henēn⁶ that ye may.'

'It shall be done (quod Simkin) by my fay.
 What will ye do while that it is in hand?'

'By God, right by the hopper will I stand,
 (Quod John) and see how that the corn goes in.
 Yet saw I never, by my father's kin,
 How that the hopper waggēs to and fro.'

Alein answered, 'John, and wilt thou so?

² Equal, or match.³ Servant.⁴ Expect.⁵ Cheek teeth.⁶ Hence.

Then will I be beneathë, by my crown,
And see how that the mealë falls adown
Into the trough, that shall be my disport:
For, John, in faith I may be of your sort;
I is as ill a miller as is ye.'

4039

This miller smiled at their nicety,
And thought, all this n'is done but for a wile.
¹ Think. They weenen¹ that no man may them beguile,
But by my thrift yet shall I blear their eye,
For all the sleight in their philosophy.
The morë quaintë knackës that they make,
The morë will I steal when that I take.
Instead of flour yet will I give them bren.
The greatest clerks are not the wisest men,
As whilom to the wolf thus spake the mare:
Of all their art ne count I not a tare.'

4050

Out at the door he go'th full privily,
When that he saw his timë, softëly.

He looketh up and down, till he hath found
The clerkës' horse, there as he stood ybound
² Arbour. Behind the mill, under a levesell: ²
And to the horse he go'th him fair and well,
And strippeth off the bridle right anon.

4060

And when the horse was loose, he 'gan to gon
Toward the fen, there wildë marës run,
And forth, with wehce! through thick and thin.
This miller go'th again, no word he said,
³ Business. But doth his note, ³ and with these clerkës
play'd,

Till that their corn was fair and well yground.
And when the meal is sacked and ybound,
This John go'th out, and finds his horse away,
And 'gan to cry, 'Harow and wala wa!
Our horse is lost: Alein, for Godde's banes,

4070

Step on thy feet; come off, man, all at anes.¹
Alas! our warden has his palfrey lorn.²

4072

¹ Once.² Lost.

This Alein all forsgat both meal and corn;
All was out of his mind his husbandry:
'What, which way is he gone?' he 'gan to cry.

The wife came leaping inward at a renne,³
She said; 'Alas! your horse go'th to the fen
With wildë mares, as fast as he may go.

³ Run.

Unthank⁴ come on his hand that bound him so, 4080
And he that better should have knit the rein.'

⁴ No thanks.

'Alas! (quod John) Alein, for Christë's pain
Lay down thy sword, and I shall mine also.
I is full wight,⁵ God wate,⁶ as is a roe.
By Godde's soul he shall not 'scape us bathe.⁷
Why ne had thou put the capel⁸ in the lathe?⁹
Ill hail, Alein, by God thou is a fonne.'¹⁰

⁵ Swift.⁶ Knows.⁷ Both.⁸ Horse.⁹ Barn.¹⁰ Fool.¹¹ Run.

These silly clerkës have full fast yronne¹¹
Toward the fen, both Alein and eke John;
And when the miller saw that they were gone, 4090
He half a bushel of their flour hath take,
And bade his wife go knead it in a cake.
He said; 'I trow, the clerkës were afeard,
Yet can a miller make a clerkë's beard,
For all his art. Yea, let them go their way.
Lo where they go. Yea, let the children play:
They get him not so lightly, by my crown.'

These silly clerkës runnen up and down
With 'Keep, keep; stand, stand; jossa,¹² warderere.
Go whistle thou, and I shall keep him here.' 4100
But shortly, till that it was very night
They couldë not, though they did all their might,
Their capel catch, he ran alway so fast:
Till in a ditch they caught him at the last.
Weary and wet, as beastës in the rain,

¹¹ Come hither.

Comes silly John, and with him comes Alein. 4108
 ‘Alas (quod John) the day that I was born!
 Now are we driven till hething¹ and till scorn.
 Our corn is stoln, men will us fonnës² call,
 Both the wardén, and eke our fellows all, 4110
 And namëly the miller, wala wa!’

¹ Con-
temp.
² Fools.

Thus ‘plaineth John, as he go’th by the way
 Toward the mill, and bayard³ in his hond.
 The miller sitting by the fire he fond,
 For it was night, and forther⁴ might they nought,
 But for the love of God they him besought
 Of herberow⁵ and of ease, as for their penny.⁶

³ A bay
horse.
⁴ Advance.
⁵ Lodging.
⁶ Pay.

The miller said again, ‘If there be any,
 Such as it is, yet shall ye have your part.
 Mine house is strait, but ye have learned art; 4120
 Ye can by arguments makin a place
 A milë broad, of twenty foot of space.
 Let see now if this placë may suffice,

⁷ Manner.

Or make it room with speech, as is your guise.’⁷
 ‘Now, Simond, (said this John) by Saint Cuthberd
 Aye is thou merry, and that is fair answer’d.

⁸ Such.

I have heard say, man shall take of two things,
 Slike⁸ as he findës, or slike as he brings.

⁹ Cause.

But specially I pray thee, hostë dear,
 Gar⁹ us have meat and drink, and make us cheer,
 And we shall payen truly at the full:

¹⁰ Allure.

With empty hand, men may no hawkës tull.¹⁰
 Lo here our silver ready for to spend.’

This miller to the town his daughter send
 For ale and bread, and roasted them a goose,
 And bound their horse, he should no more go
 loose:

¹¹ Cover-
leta.

And in his owen chamber them made a bed,
 With sheetës and with chalons¹¹ fair yspread,

Not from his owen bed ten foot or twelve: 4139
 His daughter had a bed all by herself,
 Right in the samë chamber by and by:
 It mightë be no bet,¹ and causë why,
 There was no roomer² herberow³ in the place.
 They supen, and they speaken of solace,
 And drinnen ever strong ale at the best.
 Abouten midnight wentë they to rest.

Well hath this miller varnished his head,
 Full pale he was, for-drunken, and nought red.*
 He yoxeth,⁴ and he speaketh through the nose,
 As he were on the quakke,⁵ or on the pose.⁶ 4150
 To bed he go'th, and with him go'th his wife,
 As any jay she light was and jolif,
 So was her jolly whistle well ywet.

The cradle at her bedde's feet was set,
 To rocken, and to give the child to souk.
 And when that drunken was all in the crouk,⁷
 To bedde went the daughter right anon,
 To bedde go'th Alein, and also John.

There n'as no morë; needeth them no dwale.⁸ 4160
 This miller hath so wisly⁹ bibbed ale,
 That as an horse he snorteth in his sleep,
 Ne of his tail behind he took no keep.
 His wife bare him a burdon¹⁰ a full strong;
 Men might their routing hearen a furlong.
 The wenchë routeth eke *par compagnie*.

Alein the clerk that heard this melody,
 He poketh John, and saidë: 'Sleepest thou?
 Heardest thou ever slike¹¹ a song ere now?
 Lo what a compline¹² is ymell¹³ them all.
 A wildë fire upon their bodies fall,
 Who hearken'd ever slike a ferly¹⁴ thing?

¹ Better.
² Wider.
³ Lodging.

⁴ Hiccups.
⁵ Inarticulate noise.
⁶ Phlegm.

⁷ Pitcher.

⁸ Sleeping-drink.
⁹ Surely.

¹⁰ Bassa.

¹¹ Such.
¹² Even-song.
¹³ Among.
¹⁴ Strange.

* 'Red.' past participle of 'rede,' to advise, explain, &c.

¹ No matter.

Yea, they shall have the flour of evil ending.
 This longë night there tidës me no rest.
 But yet no force,¹ all shall be for the best.
 For, John, (said he) as ever may I thrive,
 If that I may, yon wenchë will I swive.
 Some easëment has law yshapen us.
 For, John, there is a law that sayeth thus,
 That if a man in one point be aggrieved,
 That in another he shall be relieved.
 Our corn is stoln, soothly it is no nay,
 And we have had an evil fit to-day.
 And since I shall have none amendëment
 Against my loss, I will have an easement:
 By Goddë's soul, it shall none other be.'

4172

4180

² Take care of yourself.

³ Awake.

This John answered; ' Alein, avisë thee:²
 The miller is a perilous man,' he said,
 ' And if that he out of his sleep abraid,³
 He mightë do us both a villainy.'

Alein answered; ' I count him not a fly.'
 And up he rose, and by the wench he crept.
 This wenchë lay upright, and fastë slept,
 Till he so nigh was, ere she might espy,
 That it had been too latë for to cry:
 And shortly for to say, they were at one.
 Now play, Alein, for I will speak of John.

4190

⁴ Pity.

⁵ Trick.

⁶ Adven-tured.

This John li'th still a furlong way or two,
 And to himself he maketh ruth⁴ and woe.
 ' Alas! (quod he) this is a wicked jape;⁵
 Now may I say, that I is but an ape.
 Yet has my fellow somewhat for his harm;
 He has the miller's daughter in his arm:
 He auntred⁶ him, and hath his needës sped,
 And I lie as a draf-f-sack in my bed;
 And when this jape is told another day,

4200

I shall be holden a daffe¹ or a cockenay:²

4206

¹ Fool.

I will arise, and auntre it, by my fay:

² A term of contempt.

Unhardy³ is unsely,⁴ thus men say.'

³ Cowardly.⁴ Unhappy.

And up he rose, and softely he went

4210

⁵ Took.

Unto the cradle, and in his hand it hent,⁵

And bare it soft unto his bedde's feet.

⁶ Left off.

Soon after this the wife her routing lete,⁶

And 'gan awake, and went her out to piss,

And came again, and 'gan the cradle miss,

And groped here and there, but she found none.

' Alas! (quod she) I had almost misgone,

I had almost gone to the clerkës' bed.

Ey! *benedicite*, then had I foul ysped.'

And forth she go'th, till she the cradle fand.

4220

She gropeth alway further with her hand,

And found the bed, and thoughtë not but good,

Becausë that the cradle by it stood,

And n'istë⁷ where she was, for it was derk,

But fair and well she crept in by the clerk,

And li'th full still, and would have caught a sleep.

Within a while this John the clerk up lepe,

And on this goodë wife he lay'th on sore;

So merry a fit ne had she not full yore.⁸

He pricketh hard and deep, as he were mad.

This jolly life have these two clerkës lad,

4230

Till that the thirdë cock began to sing.

Alein wax'd weary in the morwening,

For he had swonken⁹ all the longë night,

And said; ' Farewell, Malkin, my sweetë wight.

The day is come, I may no longer bide,

But evermore, where so I go or ride,

I is thine owen clerk, so have I hele.'¹⁰

' Now, dearë leman,' quod she, ' go, farewele:

But or thou go, one thing I will thee tell.

⁷ Knew not.⁸ Long.⁹ Labour-ed.¹⁰ Health.

¹ Mill.

When that thou wendest homeward by the mell,¹
 Right at the entry of the door behind
 Thou shalt a cake of half a bushel find,
 That was ymaked of thine owen meal,
 Which that I help'd my father for to steal.
 And goodë leman, God thee save and keep.'
 And with that word she 'gan almost to weep.

4241

Alein uprose and thought, ere that it daw
 I will go creepen in by my fellaw:
 And found the cradle at his hand anon.

'By God,' thought he, 'all wrong I have misgone:

² Work.

My head is totty of my swink² to night,
 That maketh me that I go not aright.
 I wot well by the cradle I have misgo;
 Here li'th the miller and his wife also.'
 And forth he go'th a twenty devil way
 Unto the bed, there as the miller lay.

4251

³ Thought.

He wend³ have creped by his fellow John,
 And by the miller in he crept anon,
 And caught him by the neck, and 'gan him shake,
 And said; 'Thou John, thou swinë's-head, awake
 For Christë's soul, and hear a noble game:
 For by that lord that called is Saint Jame,
 As I have thriës as in this short night
 Swived the miller's daughter bolt-upright,
 While thou hast as a coward been aghast.'

4261

'Yea, falsë harlot,' quod the miller, 'hast?
 Ah, falsë traitor, falsë clerk, (quod he)
 Thou shalt be dead, by Goddë's dignity,
 Who durstë be so bold to disparâge
 My daughter, that is come of such lineage?'
 And by the throatë-ball he caught Alein,
 And he him hent¹ despiteously again,
 And on the nose he smote him with his fist;

4270

⁴ Seized.

Down ran the bloody stream upon his breast: 4274
 And in the floor with nose and mouth to-broke
 They wallow, as do two pigs in a poke.
 And up they go, and down again anon,
 Till that the miller spurned at a stone,
 And down he fell backwárd upon his wife,
 That wistë nothing of this nicë strife: 4280
 For she was fall asleep a little wight¹
 With John the clerk, that waked had all night:
 And with the fall out of her sleep she braid.²
 'Help, holy cross of Broméholm,³ (she said)
In manus tuas, Lord, to thee I call.
 Awakë, Simond, the fiend is on me fall;
 Mine heart is broken; help; I n'am but dead:
 There li'th one up my womb and up mine head.
 Help, Simkin, for the falsë clerkës fight.'
 This John start up as fast as ever he might, 4290
 And graspeth by the wallës to and fro
 To find a staff, and she start up also,
 And knew the estres⁴ bet⁵ than did this John,
 And by the wall she took a staff anon:
 And saw a little shimmering of a light,
 For at an hole in shone the moonë bright,
 And by that light she saw them bothë two,
 But sikerly⁶ she n'istë⁷ who was who,
 But as she saw a white thing in her eye.
 And when she 'gan this whitë thing espy, 4300
 She wend⁸ the clerk had wear'd a volupere;⁹
 And with the staff she drew aye nere and nere,¹⁰
 And wend have hit this Alein attë full,
 And smote the miller on the pilled¹¹ skull,
 That down he go'th, and cried, 'Harow! I die.'
 These clerkës beat him well, and let him lie,
 And greithen¹² them, and take their horse anon,

¹ Short space of time.

² Woke.

³ A priory in Norfolk.

⁴ Interior of a house.

⁵ Better.

⁶ Certainly.

⁷ Knew not.

⁸ Thought.

⁹ Night-cap.

¹⁰ Nearer.

¹¹ Bald.

¹² Made ready.

And eke their meal, and on their way they gon : 4308
And at the mill door eke they took their cake
Of half a bushel flour, full well ybake.

Thus is the proudë miller well ybeat,
And hath ylost the grinding of the wheat,
And payed for the supper every deal
Of Alein and of John, that beat him well;
His wife is swived, and his daughter als;
Lo, such it is a miller to be false.

And therefore this proverb is said full sooth,
Him thar¹ not winnen² well that evil do'þ;
A guiler shall himself beguiled be:
And God that sitteth high in majesty 4320
Save all this companië, great and smale.
Thus have I quit the miller in my tale.

¹ Behoves.

² Gain.

THE COOK'S PROLOGUE.

THE Cook of London, while the Reeve spake, 4323

For joy (him thought) he claw'd¹ him on the back:

¹ Stroked.

'Aha! (quod he) for Christë's passiōn,

This miller had a sharp conclusiōn,

Upon this argument of herbergage.²

² Lodging.

Well saidē Solomon in his languāge,

Ne bring not every man into thine house,

For harbouring by night is perilōus.

4330

Well ought a man avised for to be

Whom that he brought into his privity.

I pray to God so give me sorrow and care,

If ever, sithen³ I hight Hodge of Ware,

³ Since.

Heard I a miller bet yset a-werk;⁴

⁴ Better handled.

He had a jape⁵ of malice in the derk.

⁵ Trick.

But God forbidē that we stinten⁶ here,

⁶ Stop.

And therefore if ye vouchensafe to hear

A tale of me that am a poorē man,

I will you tell as well as ever I can

4340

A little jape that fell in our city.'

Our Host answer'd and said; 'I grant it thee:

Now tell on, Roger, and look that it be good,

For many a pasty hast thou letten blood,

And many a Jack of Dover hast thou sold,

That hath been twicë hot and twicë cold. 4346
 Of many a pilgrim hast thou Christë's curse,
 For of thy parsley yet fare they the worse,
 That they have eaten in thy stubble goose:
 For in thy shop go'þ many a fly loose. 4350
 Now tell on, gentle Roger by thy name,
 But yet I pray thee be not wroth for game;
 A man may say full sooth in game and play.'
 'Thou sayst full sooth,' quod Roger, 'by my fay;
¹ Evil play. 1 But sooth play *quade spel*,¹ as the Fleming saith,
 And therefore, Harry Bailly, by thy faith,
 Be thou not wroth, or we departen here,
 Though that my tale be of an hostelere.
 But natheless, I will not tell it yet,
² Cer- 2 But ere we part, ywis² thou shalt be quit.' 4360
³ Laughed. 3 And therewithal he lough³ and madë cheer,
 And said his tale, as ye shall after hear.

THE COOK'S TALE

A PRENTICE whilom dwelt in our city,
 And of a craft of victuallers was he:
⁴ Brisk. 4 Gaillard⁴ he was, as goldfinch in the shaw,⁵
⁵ Grove. 5 Brown as a berry, a proper short fellaw:
⁶ Neatly. 6 With lockës black, combed full fetisly.⁶
⁷ Called. 7 Dancen he could so well and jollily,
 That he was cleped⁷ Perkin Revellour.
 He was as full of love and paramour,
 As is the hive full of honey sweet;
 Well was the wenchë with him mightë meet. 4370

At every bridal would he sing and hop;
 He loved bet the tavern than the shop.
 For when there any riding was in Cheap,
 Out of the shoppë thither would he leap,
 And till that he had all the sight yseen,
 And danced well, he would not come again;
 And gather'd him a meinie¹ of his sort,
 To hop and sing, and maken such disport:
 And there they setten steven² for to meet
 To playen at the dice in such a street.
 For in the town ne was there no prentice,
 That fairer couldē cast a pair of dice
 Than Perkin could, and thereto he was free
 Of his dispense,³ in place of privity.⁴
 That found his master well in his chaffare,⁵
 For often time he found his box full bare.

For soothly, a prentice, a revelloúr,
 That haunteth dice, riot, and paramour,
 His master shall it in his shop abie,⁶
 All⁷ have he no part of the minstrelsy.
 For theft and riot they be convertible,
 All can they play on gittern or ribble.⁸
 Revel and troth, as in a low degree,
 They be full wroth all day, as men may see.

This jolly prentice with his master abode,
 Till he was nigh out of his prenticehode,
 All were he snubbed both early and late,
 And sometime led with revel to Newgate.
 But at the last his master him bethought
 Upon a day, when he his paper sought,
 Of a proverb, that saith this samë word;
 Well bet⁹ is rotten apple out of hoard,
 Than that it rotē all the remenant:
 So fareth it by a riotous servant;

4373

¹ A train,
a set.

4380

² Appoint-
ment.³ Expense.⁴ Private
business.⁵ Merchan-
dise.

4390

⁶ Suffer
for.
⁷ Al-
though.⁸ A musi-
cal in-
strument.

4400

⁹ Better.

¹ Go.	It is well lessē harm to let him pace, ¹	4407
² Corrupt.	Than he shend ² all the servants in the place. Therefore his master gave him a quittance, And bade him go, with sorrow and with mischance.	
³ Desire.	And thus this jolly prentice had his leave: ³ Now let him riot all the night or leave.	
⁴ Receiver.	And for there n̄is no thief without a louke, ⁴ That helpeth him to wasten and to souk ⁵	
⁵ Suck.	Of that he briben can, or borrow may, Anon he sent his bed and his array Unto a compere ⁶ of his owen sort,	
⁶ Comrade.	That loved dice, and riot, and disport; And had a wife, that held for countenance A shop, and swived for her sustenance.	4420

* * * *

THE MAN OF LAW'S PROLOGUE.

OUR Hostē saw well, that the brightē sun
 The arc of his artificial day had run
 The fourthē part, and half an hour and more;
 And though he were not deep expert in lore,
 He wist it was the eight and twenty day
 Of April, that is messenger to May;
 And saw well that the shadow of every tree
 Was as in length of the same quantity
 That was the body erect, that caused it;
 And therefore by the shadow he took his wit,¹
 That Phœbus, which that shone so clear and bright,
 Degrees was five and forty clomb on height;
 And for that day, as in that latitude,
 It was ten of the clock, he 'gan conclude;
 And suddenly he plight² his horse about.

'Lordings,' quod he, 'I warn you all this rout,³
 The fourthē partie of this day is gone.
 Now for the love of God and of Saint John
 Loseth no time, as farforth as ye may.
 Lordings, the time it wasteth night and day,
 And steal'th from us, what privily sleepīng,
 And what through negligence in our wakīng.
 As doth the stream, that turneth never again,

4421

¹ Know-
ledge.² Pulled.
³ Com-
pany.

4440

Descending from the mountain into a plain. 4444

Well can Senec and many a philosophher

Bewailen timē, more than gold in coffer.

For loss of chattel may recovered be,

¹ Ruineth.

But loss of timē shendeth¹ us, quod he.

² Doubt.

It will not come again withouten dread,²

No morē than will Malkin's maidenhead,

When she hath lost it in her wantonness.

Let us not moulden thus in idleness.

³ Agree-
ment.

'Sir Man of Law,' quod he, 'so have ye bliss,

Tell us a tale anon, as forword³ is.

Ye be submitted through your free assent

To stand in this case at my judgēment.

⁴ Acquit.
⁵ Promise.

Acquiteth⁴ you now, and holdeth your behest;⁵

Then have ye done your devoir at the least.'

'Hostē,' quod he, '*de par dieux jeo assente*,

To breaken forword is not mine intent.

Behest is debt, and I would hold it fain

All my behest, I can no better sayn.

For such law as man giveth another wight,

He should himselfen usen it by right.

⁶ Worthy.

Thus will our text: but nathēless certāin

⁷ Ignor-
antly.

I can right now no thrifty⁶ talē sayn,

But Chaucer (though he can but lewēdly⁷)

On metres and on rhyming craftily)

Hath said them, in such English as he can,

Of oldē time, as knoweth many a man.

⁸ Dear.

And if he have not said them, levē⁸ brother,

In one book, he hath said them in another.

For he hath told of lovers up and down,

More than Ovidē made of mentiōn

In his *Epistolis*, that be full old.

What should I tellen them, since the

In youth he made of Ceyx and A

4444

4450

4460

4470

THE MAN OF LAW'S PELLIOT

And sithen¹ hath he spoke of ever ~~the~~
These noble wivēs, and these lover ~~the~~
Whoso that will his largē volume ~~see~~
Clepcd² the "Saintēs' Legend of ~~the~~"
There may he see the largē woundē ~~the~~
Of Lucrece, and of Babylon Thiste
The sword of Dido for the false Euse
The tree of Phillis for her Demopis
The plaint of Dejanire, and Herminor
Of Adriane, and Hypsipile;
The barren islē standing in the sea;
The drent³ Leander for his fair Helle;
The tearēs of Helen, and eke the ~~were~~
Of Briseis, and of Laodamia;
The cruelty of thee, Queen Medea,
Thy little children hanging by the halter;
For thy Jason, that was of love so faire
O Hypermnestra, Pénelop', Alcest,
Your wifehood he commendeth ~~with the~~

' But certainly no word ne ~~writ~~ ~~the~~
Of thilkē wicke example of Caius,
That loved her owen brother ~~sircul~~
(Of all such cursed stories I say, I
Or else of Tyrius Appolonius,
How that the cursed king ~~Aegeus~~
Bereft his daughter of her ~~marriag~~
That is so horribble a tale ~~for~~
W~~h~~o ~~is~~ ~~to~~ ~~know~~ ~~the~~ ~~fall~~

¹ Call. To Muses, that men clepe¹ Pierides, 4513
(Metamorphoseos wot what I mean)
 But natheless I recke not a bean,
² Hauberk. Though I come after him with hawëbake,²
 I speak in prose, and let him rhymës make.³
³ Counte- And with that word, he with a sober chere³
 nance. Began his tale, and said, as ye shall hear.

THE MAN OF LAW'S TALE.

O SCATHEFUL harm, condición of poverty,
 With thirst, with cold, with hunger so confounded,
 To asken help thee shameth in thine heart, 4521
⁴ Expense. If thou none ask, so sore art thou ywounded,
 That very need unwrappeth all thy wound hid.
 Maugre thine head thou must for indigence
 Or steal, or beg, or borrow thy dispense.⁴

⁵ Divides Thou blamest Christ, and sayst full bitterly,
 ill. He misdeparteth⁵ riches temporal;
⁶ Blamest. Thy neighëbour thou witest⁶ sinfully,
 And sayst, thou hast a little, and he hath all:
 'Parfay (sayst thou) sometime he reckon shall, 4530
⁷ Burn. When that his tail shall brennen⁷ in the glede,⁸
⁸ Fire. For he nought helpeth needful in their need.'

⁹ Better. Harken what is the sentence of the wise,
 Bet⁹ is to dien than have indigence.
 Thy selvë neighëbour will thee despise,
 If thou be poor, farewell thy reverence.

Yet of the wisē man take this sentence, Allē the days of poorē men be wicke, ¹ Beware therefore ere thou come to that prick. ²	4537	¹ Wicked. ² Point.
If thou be poor, thy brother hateth thee, And all thy friendēs flee from thee, alas! O richē merchants, full of weal ³ be ye, O noble, O prudent folk, as in this case, Your baggēs be not fill'd with ambēs ace, ⁴ But with six-cinque, ⁵ that runneth for your chance; At Christenmassē merry may ye dance.	4540	³ Wealth. ⁴ Two aces. ⁵ Six-five.
Ye seeken land and sea for your winnings, As wisē folk ye knowen all th' estate Of regnēs, ⁶ ye be fathers of tidings, And talēs, both of peace and of debate: ⁷ I were right now of talēs desolate, ⁸ N'ere ⁹ that a merchant, gone in many a year, Me taught a talē, which that ye shall hear.	4550	⁶ King- doms. ⁷ War. ⁸ Empty of. ⁹ Were it not.
In Surrie ¹⁰ whilom dwelt a company Of chapmen rich, and thereto sad ¹¹ and true, That widē were senten their spicerie, Clothēs of gold, and satins rich of hue. Their chaffare ¹² was so thrifly ¹³ and so new, That every wight hath dainty to chaffare With them, and eke to sellen them their ware.	4560	¹⁰ Syria. ¹¹ Grave. ¹² Merch- andise. ¹³ Cheap.
Now fell it, that the masters of that sort Have shapen them to Romē for to wend, Were it for chapmanhood ¹⁴ or for disport, None other message would they thither send, But come themselves to Rome, this is the end:		¹⁴ Trading.

¹ Lodging.	<p>And in such place as thought them avantage For their intent, they taken their herbergage.¹</p>	4566
	<p>Sojourned have these merchants in that town A certain time, as fell to their pleasance: And so befell, that the excellent renown Of the emperorë's daughter, Dame Custance, Reported was, with every circumstance, Unto these Surrien merchants, in such wise From day to day, as I shall you devise.</p>	4570
² God pre-serve.	<p>This was the common voice of every man: 'Our emperor of Romë, God him see,² A daughter hath, that since the world began, To reckon as well her goodness as beauty, N'as³ never such another as is she:</p>	
⁴ Was not.	<p>I pray to God in honour her sustene, And would she were of all Európe the queen.</p>	4580
⁵ Childish-ness.	<p>'In her is high beauty withouten pride, Youthë, withouten greenhed⁴ or folly: To all her workës virtue is her guide; Humbless hath slayen in her tyranny: She is mirrór of allë courtesy, Her heart is very chamber of holiness, Her hand minister of freedom for almess.⁵</p>	
⁶ Alms-deeds.	<p>And all this voice was sooth, as God is true, But now to purpose let us turn again.</p>	4590
⁷ Caused. ⁸ Former-ly. ⁹ Prosper-ity.	<p>These merchants have done⁶ freight their shippës new, And when they have this blissful maiden seen, Homë to Surrie been they went full fain, And done their needës, as they have done yore,⁷ And liven in weal,⁸ I can say you no more.</p>	

Now fell it, that these merchants stood in grace¹
 Of him that was the Soudan² of Surrie: 4597
 For when they came from any strangē place
 He woulde of his benignē courtesy
 Make them good cheer, and busily espy³
 Tidings of sundry regnēs,⁴ for to leare⁵
 The wonders that they myghtē seen or hear.

¹ Favour.² Sultan.³ Inquire.⁴ King-
doms.
⁵ Learn.

Amongēs other thingēs specially
 These merchants have him told of Dame Custance
 So great nobless, in earnest seriously,
 That this Soudan hath caught so great pleasance
 To have her figure in his remembrānce,
 That all his lust,⁶ and all his busy cure⁷
 Was for to love her, while his life may dure.

⁶ Pleasure.⁷ Care.

Parāventure in thilkē⁸ largē book, 4610
 Which that men clepe⁹ the heaven, ywritten was
 With starrēs, when that he his birthē took,
 That he for love should have his death, alas!
 For in the starrēs, clearer than is glass,
 Is written, God wot, whoso could it read,
 The death of every man withouten drede.¹⁰

⁸ That.⁹ Call.¹⁰ Doubt.

In starrēs many a winter therebefore
 Was writ the death of Hector, Achilles,
 Of Pompey, Julius, ere they were born;
 The strife of Thebes; and of Hercules,
 Of Samson, Turnus, and of Socrates
 The death; but mennē's wittēs be so dull,
 That no wight can well read it at the full.

4620

This Soudan for his privy council sent,
 And shortly of this matter for to pace,¹¹
 VOL. L X

¹¹ Pass
from.

¹ Haste.

He hath to them declared his intent,
 And said them certain, but he might have grace
 To have Custance, within a little space,
⁴⁶²⁶
 He n'as but dead, and charged them in hie¹
 To shapen for his life some remedy.

² Abuse,
improperity.

Diversë men, diversë thingës saiden;
 Then argumentës casten up and down;
 Many a subtle reason forth they laiden;
 They speaken of magic, and abusión;²
 But finally, as in conclusión,
 They cannot see in that none ávantage,
 Ne in none other way, save marriáge.

³ Believe.
⁴ Willing-
ly.
⁵ Moham-
med.

Then saw they therein such difficulty
 By way of reason, for to speak all plain,
 Becausë there was such diversity
⁴⁶⁴⁰
 Between their bothë lawës, that they sayn,
 They trowen³ that no Christian prince would fain⁴
 Wedden his child under our lawë sweet,
 That us was given by Mahound⁵ our prophéte.

⁶ Lose.
⁷ Choose.
⁸ Keeping.

And he answered: ‘Rather than I lese⁶
 Custance, I will be christen'd doubtëless:
 I must be hers, I may none other chese,⁷
 I pray you hold your arguments in peace,
 Saveth my life, and be not reckëless
 To getten her that hath my life in cure,⁸
⁴⁶⁵⁰
 For in this woe I may not long endure.’

⁹ Enlarge-
ment.

What needeth greater dilatation?⁹
 I say, by treatise and ambassadry,
 And by the Popë's mediatión,
 And all the Church, and all the chivalry,

That in destruction of Maumetry,¹
And in increase of Christë's lawë dear,
They been accorded² so as ye may hear;

4656

¹ Moham-madan-ism.
² Agreed.

How that the Soudan and his baronage,
And all his lieges should ychristened be,
And he shall have Custance in marriage,
And certain gold, I n'ot³ what quantity,
And hereto finden suffisant surety.
The same accord is sworn on either side;
Now, fair Custance, Almighty God thee guide.

4660

³ Know not.

Now woulde some men waiten, as I
guess,
That I should tellen all the purveyance,
The which that the Emperor of his nobless
Hath shapen for his daughter, Dame Custance.
Well may men know that so great ordinance
May no man tellen in a little clause,
As was arrayed for so high a cause.

4670

Bishops been shapen⁴ with her for to wend,
Lordës, ladiës, and knightës of renown,
And other folk enow,⁵ this is the end.
And notified is throughout all the town,
That every wight with great devotioún
Should prayen Christ, that he this marriage
Receive in gree,⁶ and speedë this viáge.⁷

⁴ Pre-pared.⁵ Enough.⁶ Good-will.
⁷ Journey.

The day is comen of her départing,
I say the woful day fatál is come,
That there may be no longer tarrying,
But forward they them dressen all and some.
Custance, that was with sorrow all overcome,

4680

Full pale arose, and dresseth her to wend,
For well she seeth there n'is none other end.

4685

Alas! what wonder is it though she wept?
That shall be sent to strangë nation
From friendës, that so tenderly her kept,
And to be bound under subjección
Of one, she know'th not his conditión.
Husbandës be all good, and have been yore,¹
That knownen wivës,—I dare say no more.

4690

¹ Long ago.

Father, (she said) thy wretched child Custance,
Thy youngë daughter, foster'd up so soft,
And ye, my mother, my sovereign pleasance
Over all thing, (out-taken² Christ on loft,³)
Custance your child her recommendeth oft
Unto your grace; for I shall to Surrie,
Ne shall I never see you more with eye.

4700

² Excepting.
³ High.

Alas! unto the Barbare nation
I mustë go, since that it is your will:
But Christ, that starf⁴ for our redemptiόn,
So give me grace his hestës to fulfil,
I wretched woman no force⁵ though I spill;⁶
Women are born to thraldom and penánce,
And to be under mannë's governance.'

⁴ Died.⁵ No matter.
⁶ Perish.⁷ Think.

I trow⁷ at Troy when Pyrrhus brake the wall,
Or Ilion burnt, or Thebes the city,
Ne at Romë for the harm through Hannibal,
That Romans hath vanquished timës three,
N'as heard such tender weeping for pity,
As in the chamber was for her parting,
But forth she must, whether she weep or sing.

4710

O firstë moving cruel Firmament,
 With thy diurnal swegh¹ that croudest² aye,
 And hurtlest all from East till Occident,
 That naturally would hold another way;
 Thy crowding set the heaven in such array
 At the beginning of this fierce viáge,³
 That cruel Mars hath slain this marriáge.

4715

¹ Motion.
² Shovest together.

Unfortunate ascendant tortuous,
 Of which the lord is helpless fall, alas!
 Out of his angle into the darkest house.
 O Mars, O Atyzar,* as in this case;
 O feeble Moon, unhappy been thy pace.
 Thou knittest⁴ thee there⁵ thou art not received,[†]
 There thou were well from thennés art thou weived.⁶

4720

³ Journey.

Imprudent Emperor of Rome, alas!
 Was there no philosópher in all thy town?
 Is no time bet⁷ than other in such case?
 Of viage is there none elección,
 Namely to folk of high conditión,
 Not when a root is of a birth yknow?⁸
 Alas! we be too lewed,⁹ or too slow.

4730

⁴ Joineſt.
⁵ Where.
⁶ Declined.

To ship is brought this woful fairë maid
 Solemnely, with every circumstance:
 ‘Now Jesus Christ be with you all,’ she said.
 There n’is no more, but ‘Farewell, fair Custance.’
 She paineth her to make good countenance,
 And forth I let her sail in this manner,
 And turn I will again to my matter.

4740

⁷ Better.
⁸ Known.
⁹ Ignorant.

The mother of the Soudan, well of vices,

= ‘Atyzar:’ Spanish word for a fire.

+ ‘Art not received:’ thou makeſt unfit matches and separations.

¹ Full. Espied hath her sonē's pléin¹ intent, 4744
² Leave. How he will lete² his oldē sacrifices:
And right anon she for her council sent,
And they been comen, to know what she meant,
And when assembled was this folk in fere,³
She set her down, and said as ye shall hear.

⁴ Promise. ‘ Lordēs, (she said) ye knownen every one, 4750
How that my son in point is for to lete
The holy lawēs of our Alkaron,
Given by Goddē's messenger Mahomet:
But one avow to greatē God I hete,⁴
The life shall rather out of my body start,
Than Mahometē's law out of mine heart.

⁵ Befall. ‘ What should us tiden⁵ of this newē law
But thraldom to our bodies and penānce,
And afterward in hellē to be draw,
For we reneied⁶ Mahound our creance?⁷ 4760
⁶ Denied.
⁷ Belief. But, lordēs, will ye maken assurance,
As I shall say, assenting to my lore?⁸
And I shall make us safe for evermore.’

⁸ Try. They sworen, and assented every man
To live with her and die, and by her stond:
And every one, in the best wise he can,
To strengthen her shall all his friendēs fond.⁹
And she hath this emprise ytaken in hond,
Which ye shall hearen that I shall devise,
And to them all she spake right in this wise. 4770

¹⁰ Little. ‘ We shall first feign us Christendom to take;
Cold water shall not grieve us but a lite:¹⁰
And I shall such a feast and revel make,

That, as I trow, I shall the Soudan quite.¹ 4774 ¹ Requite.
 For though his wife be christen'd never so white,
 She shall have need to wash away the red,
 Though she a font of water with her led.'

O Soudaness,² root of iniquity,
 Virago thou, Semiramis the second,
 O serpent under femininity,
 Like to the serpent deep in hell ybound:
 O feigned woman, all that may confound
 Virtue and innocence, through thy malice,
 Is bred in thee, as nest of every vice. 4780 ² Sultan-
 ess.

O Satan envious! since thilkē day
 That thou wert chased from our heritage,
 Well knowest thou to woman th' oldē way.
 Thou madest Eva bring us in servāge,
 Thou wilt fordo³ this Christian marriāge:
 Thine instrument so (wala-wa the while!) 4790 ³ Ruin.
 Mak'st thou of women when thou wilt beguile.

This Soudaness, whom I thus blame and warrey,⁴ ⁴ Oppose.
 Let privily her council go their way:
 What should I in this talē longer tarry?
 She rideth to the Soudan on a day,
 And said him, that she would reney⁵ her lay,⁶
 And Christendom of priestēs' handēs fong,⁷ ⁵ Deny.
 Repenting her she heathen was so long; ⁶ Profession.
⁷ Take.

Beseeching him to do her that honōur,
 That she might have the Christian folk to feast: 4800
 'To please them I will do my laboúr.'
 The Soudan saith, 'I will do at your hest,'⁸
 And kneeling, thanked her of that request;

⁸ Com-
 mand.

¹ Knew not.	So glad he was, he n'ist ¹ not what to say, She kiss'd her son, and home she go'th her way.	4804
² Message.	Arrived been these Christian folk to lond In Surrie, with a great solemnë rout, And hastily this Soudan sent his sond, ²	
³ King- dom.	First to his mother, and all the regne ³ about, And said, his wife was comen out of doubt,	
⁴ To meet.	And pray'd them for to riden again ⁴ the queen, The honour of his regnë to sustene.	4810
⁵ Com- pany.	Great was the press, and richë was th' array Of Surriens and Romans met in fere. ⁵	
⁶ Counte- nance.	The mother of the Soudan rich and gay Received her with all so glad a chere, ⁶ As any mother might her daughter dear : And to the nextë city there beside A softë pace solemnely they ride.	
⁷ Believe.	Nought trow ⁷ I, the triúmph of Julius, Of which that Lucan maketh such a boast, Was royaller, or more curious, Than was th' assembly of this blissful host:	4820
⁸ Spirit.	Buttë this scorpion, this wicked ghost, ⁸ The Soudaness, for all her flattering Cast ⁹ under this full mortally to sting.	
¹⁰ Contriv- ed.	The Soudan com'th himself soon after this So royally, that wonder is to tell: And welcom'th her with allë joy and bliss. And thus in mirth and joy I let them dwell.	
¹¹ Stop.	The fruit of this mattér is that I tell. When timë came, men thought it for the best That revel stint, ¹⁰ and men go to their rest.	4830

The timē come is, this old Soudaness
 Ordained hath the feast of which I told,
 And to the feastē Christian folk them dress
 In general, yea, bothē young and old.
 There may men feast and royalty behold,
 And dainties more than I can you devise,
 But all too dear they bought it ere they rise.

4834

4840

O sudden woe, that ever art successour
 To worldly bliss! sprent¹ is with bitterness
 Th' end of the joy of our worldly labōur :
 Woe occupieth the fine² of our gladness.
 Harken this counsel for thy sikerness :³
 Upon thy gladē day have in thy mind
 The unaware⁴ woe of harm, that com'th behind.

¹ Sprinkled.² End.³ Security.⁴ Unforeseen.

For shortly for to tellen at a word,
 The Soudan and the Christians every one
 Been all to-hewn, and sticked at the board,
 But it were only Dame Custance alone.
 This oldē Soudaness, this cursed crone,
 Hath with her friendēs done this cursed deed,
 For she herself would all the country lead.

4850

Ne there was Surrien none that was converted,
 That of the counsel of the Soudan wot,
 That he n'as⁵ all to-hew, ere he astarted:⁶
 And Custance have they taken anon foot-hot,⁷
 And in a ship all steerēless (God wot)
 They have her set, and bidden her learnē sail
 Out of Surrie againward to Itale.

⁵ Was not.
⁶ Escaped.
⁷ In haste.

4860

A certain treasure that she thither lad,⁸
 And sooth to say, vitaillē great plenty,

⁸ Led.

They have her given, and clothës eke she had, 4864
 And forth she saileth in the saltë sea:
 O my Custance, full of benignity,
 O emperorë's youngë daughter dear,
 He that is lord of fortune be thy steer.¹

¹ Helm,
guide.

She blesseth her, and with full piteous voice
 Unto the cross of Christ thus saidë she; 4870
 'O clear, O wealful² altar, holy cross,
 Red of the Lambë's blood, full of pity,
 That wash'd the world from the old iniquity,
 Me from the fiend, and from his clawës keep,
 That day that I shall drenchen³ in the deep.

² Full of
good.

³ Drown.

⁴ Expeller.

⁵ Floated.

⁶ Where.

' Victorious tree, protection of true,
 That only worthy werë for to bear
 The King of heaven, with his woundës new,
 The whitë Lamb, that hurt was with a spear;
 Flemer⁴ of fiendës, out of him and her 4880
 On which thy limbës faithfully extenden,
 Me keep, and give me might my life to amenden.'

Yearës and dayës fleet⁵ this créature
 Throughout the sea of Greece, unto the strait
 Of Maroc, as it was her áventure:
 On many a sorry meal now may she bait,
 After her death full often may she wait,
 Ere that the wildë wavës will her drive
 Unto the place there⁶ as she shall arrive.

Men mighthen asken, why she was not slain
 Eke at the feast who might her body assai
 And I answer to that demand again
 Who saved Daniel in the horrible

There every wight, save he, master or knave,
Was with the lion frett,¹ or he astart?²
No wight but God; that he bare in his heart.

4894

¹ Torn.² Escaped.

God list to shew his wonderful miracle
In her, for we should see his mighty werkës:
Christ, which that is to every harm triácle,³
By certain meanës oft, as knownen clerkës,
Doth thing for certain endë, that full derk is
To manne's wit, that for our ignorance
Ne cannot know his prudent purveyance.⁴

4900

³ Remedy for.⁴ Fore-sight.

Now since she was not at the feast yslaw,⁵
Who keptë her from drenching⁶ in the sea?
Who keptë Jonas in the fish's maw,
Till he was spouted up at Nineveh?
Well may men know, it was no wight but he
That kept the people Ebraise⁷ from drenching,

⁵ Hebrew.⁶ Slain.⁷ Drown-ing.

4910

Who bade the fourë spirits* of tempest,
That power have t' annoyen land and sea,
Both north and south, and also west and east,
Annoyen neither sea, nor land, nor tree!
Soothly the commandér of that was he
That from the tempest aye this woman bryg,
As well when she awoke as when she slept.

Where might this woman west and drink her wine?
The sun shone on her, and her wine
Was red wine.

red wine
red wine
red wine

	With loavës five and fishës two to feed: God sent his foison ¹ at her greatë need.	4923
¹ Abundance.		
² Name.	She driveth forth into our oceán Throughout our widë sea, till at the last Under an hold, that nemppen ² I ne can, Far in Northumberland, the wave her cast, And in the sand her ship sticked so fast, That thennës would it not in all a tide: [*] The will of Christ was that she should abide.	4930
³ Gone.	The Constable of the castle down is fare ³ To see this wreck, and all the ship he sought, And found this weary woman full of care; He found also the treasure that she brought: In her languáge mercy she besought, The life out of her body for to twin, ⁴ Her to deliver of woe that she was in.	
⁴ Separate.		
⁵ Nevertheless.	A manner Latin corrupt [†] was her speech, But algate ⁵ thereby was she understand.	4940
⁶ Inquire.	The Constable, when him list no longer seech, ⁶ This woful woman brought he to the lond. She kneeleth down, and thanketh Godde's sond; ⁷ But what she was, she woulde no man say For foul nor fair, though that she shoulde dey. ⁸	
⁷ What God had sent.		
⁸ Die.		
⁹ Compassion.	She said, she was so mazed in the sea, That she forgat her mindë, by her truth. The Constable hath of her so great pity And eke his wife, that they weepen for ruth: ⁹ She was so diligent withouten slouth	4950

* 'Not in all a tide:' would not by any means move.
† 'Latin corrupt:' a kind of bastard Latin.

To serve and pleaseen evereach in that place, 4951
 That all her love, that looken in her face.

The Constable and Dame Hermegild his wife
 Were Pagans, and that country every where;
 But Hermegild loved Custance as her life;
 And Custance hath so long sojourned there
 In orisons, with many a bitter tear,
 Till Jesu hath converted through His grace
 Dame Hermegild, Constâbless of that place.

In all that land no Christian durstë route;¹ 4960
 All Christian folk been fled from that country
 Through Pagans, that conquérden all about
 The plages² of the North by land and sea.
 To Walës fled the Christianity
 Of oldë Britons, dwelling in this isle;
 There was their refuge for the meanëwhile.

But yet n'ere³ Christian Britons so exiled,
 That there n'ere some which in their privity
 Honóured Christ, and heathen folk beguiled;
 And nigh the castle such there dwelten three: 4970
 That one of them was blind, and might not see,
 But⁴ it were with thilk⁵ eyen of his mind,
 With which men mowen⁶ see when they be blind.

Bright was the sun, as in that summer's day,
 For which the Constable and his wife also
 And Custance, have ytake the rightë way
 Toward the sea, a furlong way or two,
 To playen, and to roamen to and fro;
 And in their walk this blindë man they met,
 Crooked and old, with eyen fast yshet.⁷

¹ Assem-
ble.

² Regions.

³ Were
not.

4970

⁴ Unless.
⁵ Those.
⁶ May.

4980 ⁷ Shut.

'In the name of Christ,' (criéd this blind Britón)
 'Dame Hermegild, give me my sight again.' 4982
 This lady wax'd afraied of that soun,
 Lest that her husband, shortly for to sayn,
 Would her for Jesu Christé's love have slain,
 Till Custance made her bold, and bade her werche¹
 The will of Christ, as daughter of holy Cherche.

¹ Work.

The Constable wax'd abashed of that sight,
 And saidë; 'What amounteth all this fare?'*
 Custance answer'd; 'Sir, it is Christé's might,
 That helpeth folk out of the fiendë's snare:' 4990
 And so farforth² she 'gan our law declare,
 That she the Constable, ere that it were eve,
 Converted, and on Christ made him believe.

² Forth-with.³ Found.⁴ Hand.

This Constable was not lord of the place
 Of which I speak, there as he Custance fond,³
 But kept it strongly many a winter space,
 Under Allá, king of Northumberlond,
 That was full wise, and worthy of his hond⁴
 Against the Scotës, as men may well hear; 5000
 But turn I will again to my mattér.

⁵ Contriv-ed.⁶ Requite.⁷ Paina.⁸ Perish.⁹ Unless.

Satan, that ever us waiteth to beguile,
 Saw of Custance all her perfectioún,
 And cast⁵ anon how he might quit⁶ her while,⁷
 And made a youngë knight, that dwelt in that town,
 Love her so hot of foul affectioún,
 That verily him thought that he should spill,⁸
 But⁹ he of her might onës have his will.

He wooeth her, but it availeth nouȝt,

* 'What amounteth all this fare?' What is the meaning of all this?

She wouldē do no sinnē by no way:
 And for despite, he compassed his thought
 To maken her a shameful death to dey;
 He waiteth when the Constable is away,
 And privily upon a night he crept
 In Hermegildē's chamber while she slept.

5010

Weary, forewaked in her orisons,
 Sleepeth Custance, and Hermegild also.
 This knight, through Sathanas' temptatiōns,
 All softely is to the bed ygo,
 And cut the throat of Hermegild a-two, 5020
 And laid the bloody knife by Dame Custance,
 And went his way, there God give him mischance.

Soon after com'th this Constable home again,
 And eke Allā, that king was of that lond,
 And saw his wife despit'ously yslain,
 For which full oft he wept and wrung his hond;
 And in the bed the bloody knife he fond
 By Dame Custance. Alas! what might she say?
 For very woe her wit was all away.

To King Allā was told all this mischance, 5030
 And eke the time, and where, and in what wise,
 That in a ship was founden this Custance,
 As here before ye have heard me devise:
 The kingē's heart of pity 'gan agrise,¹
 When he saw so benign a créature
 Fall in disease² and in misáventure.

¹ Shudder.² Trouble.

For as the lamb toward his death is brought,
 So stands this innocent before the king:
 This falsē knight, that hath this treason wrought,

¹ Accuseth
falsely.

Beareth her in hand¹ that she hath done this thing:
But natheless there was great murmuring 5041
Among the people, and say they cannot guess
That she had done so great a wickedness.

² Incite-
ment.

³ Learn.

For they have seen her ever so virtuous,
And loving Hermegild right as her life:
Of this bare witness evereach in that house,
Save he that Hermegild slew with his knife:
This gentle king hath caught a great motif²
Of this witness, and thought he would inquire
Deeper in this case, truthē for to lear.³ 5050

⁴ Died.

⁵ Lieth.

⁶ Shew.

⁷ Swift.

Alas! Custance, thou hast no champion,
Ne fighten canst thou not, so wala wa!
But he that starf⁴ for our redemption,
And bound Satan, and yet lith⁵ there he lay,
So be thy strongē champion this day:
For but if Christ on thee mirácle kithe,⁶
Withouten guilt thou shalt be slain as swithe.⁷

⁸ Led.

⁹ Situated.

She set her down on knees, and thus she said;
'Immortal God, that savedst Susanne
From falsē blame, and thou merciful maid, 5060
Mary I mean, daughter to Saint Anne,
Before whose child angels singen Osanne,
If I be guiltless of this felony,
My succour be, or ellēs shall I die.'

Have ye not seen sometime a palē face
(Among a press) of him that hath been lad⁸
Toward his death, where as he getteth no grace,
And such a colour in his face hath had,
Men mighten know him that was so bestad,⁹

Amongës all the faces in that rout?
So stands Custance, and looketh her about.

5070

O queenës living in prosperity,
Duchesses, and ye ladies evereach one,
Haveth some ruth¹ on her adversity;
An emperore's daughter stands alone;
She hath no wight to whom to make her moan;
O blood royal, that standest in this drede,²
Far be thy friendës in thy greatë need.

¹ Pity.² Peril.

This Alla king hath such compassioun,
As gentle heart is fulfilled of pity,
That from his eyen ran the water down.
'Now hastily do fetch a book,' quod he;
'And if this knight will swearen, how that she
This woman slew, yet will we us avise,
Whom that we will that shall be our justice.'³

5080

³ Judge.

A Briton book, written with Evangiles,
Was fet,⁴ and on this book he swore anon
She guilty was, and in the meanë whiles
An hand him smote upon the neckë bone,
That down he fell at onës as a stone:
And both his eyen burst out of his face
In sight of everybody in that place.

5090

⁴ Brought.

A voice was heard, in general audience,
That said; 'Thou hast deslander'd guiltëless
The daughter of holy Church in high presence;
Thus hast thou done, and yet hold I my peace.'
Of this marvel aghast was all the press,
As mazed folk they standen evereach one
For dread of wreakë,⁵ save Custance alone.

⁵ Venge-
ance.

¹ Simple.

Great was the dread and eke the repentance 5100
 Of them that hadden wrong suspcion
 Upon this sely¹ innocent Custance;
 And for this miracle, in conclusion,
 And by Custance's mediation,
 The king, and many another in that place,
 Converted was, thanked be Christë's grace.

² Pity.

This falsë knight was slain for his untruth
 By judgëment of Alla hastily;
 And yet Custance had of his death great ruth;²
 And after this Jesus of his mercy 5110
 Made Alla wedden full solemnëly
 This holy woman, that is so bright and sheen,
 And thus hath Christ ymade Custance a queen.

³ Mate.

But who was woful (if I shall not lie)
 Of this wedding but Don'gild and no mo,
 The kingë's mother, full of tyranny?
 Her thought her cursed heartë burst a-two;
 She would not that her sonë had done so;
 Her thoughtë a despite that he should take
 So strange a créature unto his make.³ 5120

⁴ Straw.

Me list not of the chaff nor of the stre⁴
 Maken so long a tale, as of the corn.
 What should I tellen of the royalty
 Of this mariage, or which course go'�h beforne,
 Who bloweth in a trump or in an horn?
 The fruit of every tale is for to say;
 They eat and drink, and dance, and sing, and play.

They go to bed, as it was skill and right,
 For though that wivës be full holy things,

They musten take in patience a-night
 Such manner¹ necessaries, as be pleasings
 To folk that have ywedded them with rings,
 And lay a lite² their holiness aside
 As for the time, it may no bet³ betide.

5130

¹ Kind of.² Little.³ Better.

On her he gat a knavë⁴ child anon,
 And to a bishop, and his Constâble eke
 He took his wife to keep, when he is gone
 To Scotland-ward, his foemen for to seek.
 Now fair Custance, that is so humble and meek,
 So long is gone with childë till that still 5140
 She held her chamber, abiding Christë's will.

5140

The time is come, a knavë child she bare;
 Mauricius at the fontstone they him call.
 This Constable doth⁵ forth come a messenger,
 And wrote unto his king that cleped was Alle,
 How that this blissful tiding is befall,
 And other tidings speedful for to say.
 He hath the letter, and forth he go'th his way.

⁵ Causes to come.

This messenger, to do his àvantage,⁶
 Unto the kingë's mother rideth swith,⁷
 And salueth⁸ her full fair in his languâge.
 'Madâme,' quod he, 'ye may be glad and blithe,
 And thanken God an hundred thousand sithe;⁹
 My lady queen hath child, withouten doubt,
 To joy and bliss of all this realm about.

5150

⁶ Discharge his office.⁷ Swiftly.⁸ Saluteth.⁹ Times.

'Lo, here the letter sealed of this thing,
 That I must bear in all the haste I may:
 If ye will ought unto your son the king,
 I am your servant bothë night and day.'

¹ Please.

Donegild answer'd, 'As now at this time, nay; 5160
 But here I will all night thou take thy rest,
 To morrow will I say thee what me lest.'¹

² Steadily.

This messenger drank sadly² ale and wine,
 And stolen were his letters privily
 Out of his box, while he slept as a swine;
 And counterfeited was full subtilly
 Another letter, wrought full sinfully,
 Unto the king, direct of this mattere
 From his Constable, as ye shall after hear.

³ Witch.
⁴ On ad-
venture.

This letter spake, the queen deliver'd was 5170
 Of so horrible a fiendlike créature,
 That in the castle none so hardy was
 That any whilë durst therein endure:
 The mother was an elf³ by aventure⁴
 Ycome, by charmës or by sorcery,
 And every man hateth her company.

⁵ Will.
⁶ Pleasure.

Woe was this king when he this letter had
 seen,
 But to no wight he told his sorrows sore,
 But of his owen hand he wrote again;
 'Welcome the sond⁵ of Christ for evermore 5180
 To me, that am now learned in this lore:
 Lord, welcome be thy lust⁶ and thy pleasance,
 My lust I put all in thine ordinance.

⁷ Keep.

'Keepeth⁷ this child, all be it foul or fair,
 And eke my wife, unto mine home-coming:
 Christ when him list may senden me an heir,
 More agreeable than this to my liking.'
 This letter he sealed, privily weeping.

Which to the messenger was taken soon,
And forth he go'th, there is no more to don.

5189

O messenger, fulfill'd¹ of drunkenness,
Strong is thy breath, thy limbēs faltren aye,
And thou betrayest allē secretness;
Thy mind is lorn,² thou janglest as a jay;
Thy face is turned in a new array;
Where drunkenness reigneth in any rout,³
There is no counsel hid withouten doubt.

¹ Filled full.² Lost.³ Com-
pany.

O Donegild, I n' have none English digne⁴
Unto thy malice, and thy tyranny:
And therefore to the fiend I thee resign,
Let him enditen of thy traitory.
Fye, mannish,⁵ fye; O nay, by God I lie;
Fye, fiendlike spirit, for I dare well tell,
Though thou here walk, thy spirit is in hell.

5200

⁴ Man-like,
un-
womanly.

This messenger cometh from the king again,
And at the kingē's mother's court he light,
And she was of this messenger full fain,
And pleased him in all that ever she might.
He drank, and well his girdle underpight;⁶
He sleepeth, and he snoreth in his guise
All night, until the sunnē 'gan arise.

5210

⁵ Put under.

Eft⁷ were his letters stolen every one,
And counterfeited letters in this wise.
The king commanded his Constâble anon
Up' pain of hanging and of high jewise,⁸
That he ne shouldē suffren in no wise
Custance within his regne⁹ for to abide
Three dayēs, and a quarter of a tide;

⁶ Again.⁷ Judg-
ment.⁸ King-
dom.

But in the samë ship as he her fond,
Her and her youngë son, and all her gear
He shouldë put, and croud¹ her from the lond,
And charge her, that she never eft² come there.
O my Custance, well may thy ghost³ have fear,
And sleeping in thy dream be in penânce,
When Donegild cast all this ordinance.

5219

¹ Push.² Again.³ Spirit.⁴ Saw.

This messenger on morrow when he awoke,
Unto the castle held the nextë way;
And to the Constable he the letter took;
And when that he this piteous letter sey,⁴
Full oft he said, ‘Alas, and wala wa! 5220
Lord Christ,’ quod he, ‘how may this world endure?
So full of sin is many a creature.

⁵ Perish.

‘O mighty God, if that it be thy will,
Since thou art rightful judge, how may it be
That thou wilt suffren innocence to spill,⁵
And wicked folk reign in prosperity?
Ah! good Custance, alas! so woe is me,
That I must be thy tormentour, or dey
A shamë’s death, there is none other way.’

⁶ will.

Weepen both young and old in all that place, 5240
When that the king this cursed letter sent:
And Custance with a deadly palë face
The fourthë day toward the ship she went:
But natheless she tak’th in good intent
The will of Christ, and kneeling on the strand
She saidë, ‘Lord, aye welcome be thy sond.⁶

‘He that me keptë from the falsë blame,
While I was in the land amongës you,

He can me keep from harm and eke from shame
 In the salt sea, although I see not how: 5250
 As strong as ever he was, he is yet now,
 In him trust I, and in his mother dear,
 That is to me my sail and eke my steer.'¹

¹ Guide.

Her little child lay weeping in her arm,
 And kneeling piteously to him she said,
 'Peace, little son, I will do thee no harm:'
 With that her kerchief off her head she braid,²
 And over his little eyen she it laid,
 And in her arm she lulleth it full fast,
 And into the heaven her eyen up she cast. 5260

² Took.

'Mother,' quod she, 'and maiden bright, Mary,
 Sooth is, that through womannë's eggement³
 Mankind was lorn,⁴ and damned aye to die,
 For which thy child was on a cross yrent:
 Thy blissful eyen saw all his torment,
 Then is there no comparison between
 Thy woe, and any woe man may sustene.

³ Incite-
ment.⁴ Lost.

'Thou saw thy child yslain before thine eyen,
 And yet now liveth my little child, parfay:⁵
 Now, lady bright, to whom all woful cryen,
 Thou glory of womanhood, thou fairë may,⁶
 Thou haven of refuge, bright star of day,
 Rue⁷ on my child, that of thy gentleness
 Ruest on every rueful in distress.

5270

⁵ By my
faith.⁶ Maid.⁷ Have
pity.

'O little child, alas! what is thy guilt,
 That never wroughtest sin as yet, pardie?
 Why will thine hardë father have thee spilt?⁸
 O mercy, dearë Constable,' (quod she)

⁸ Destroy-
ed.

'As let my little child dwell here with thee:
And if thou dar'st not saven him from blame,
So kiss him onës in his father's name.'

5279

¹ Pitiless.

Therewith she looketh backward to the land,
And saidë; 'Farewell, husband ruthëless!'¹
And up she rose, and walketh down the strand
Toward the ship, her followeth all the press:
And ever she prayeth her child to hold his
peace,
And tak'þ her leave, and with an holy intent
She blesseth her, and into the ship she went.

² Doubt.

Vitaïlled was the ship, it is no drede,²

5290

Abundantly for her a full long space:

³ Praised.

And other necessaries that should need

⁴ Provide.

She had enow, heried³ be Goddë's grace:

For wind and weather, Almighty God purchase,⁴

And bring her home, I can no better say,

But in the sea she driveth forth her way.

Alla the king com'þ home soon after this
Unto his castle, of the which I told,
And asketh where his wife and his child is;
The Constable 'gan about his heartë cold,
And plainly all the matter he him told
As ye have heard, I can tell it no better,
And shew'd the king his sealë and his letter;

5300

⁵ Make known⁶ Plain.

And saidë; 'Lord, as ye commanded me
Up' pain of death, so have I done certain,'
This messenger tormented was, till he
Mustë beknow,⁵ and tellen plat⁶ and plain,
From night to night in what place he had lain:

And thus by wit and subtle inquiring
Imagined was by whom this harm 'gan spring.

5308

The hand was knownen that the letter wrote,
And all the venom of this cursed deed;
But in what wisë, certainly I n'ot.¹
The effect is this, that Alla out of drede²
His mother slew, that may men plainly read,
For that she traitor was to her liegeance:
Thus endeth this old Don'gild with mischance.

¹ Know
not.
² Doubt.

The sorrow that this Alla night and day
Maketh for his wife and for his child also,
There is no tongüe that it tellen may.
But now will I again to Custance go,
That floateth in the sea in pain and woe
Five year and more, as liked Christë's sond,³
Or that her ship approached to the lond.

5320

³ Com-
mand.

Under an heathen castle at the last,
(Of which the name in my text I not find)
Custance and eke her child the sea up cast.
Almighty God, that saved all mankind,
Have on Custance and on her child some mind,
That fallen is in heathen hand eftsoon
In point to spill,⁴ as I shall tell you soon.

5330

⁴ Ready to
perish.

Down from the castle com'th there many a wight
To gauren⁵ on this ship, and on Custance:
But shortly from the castle on a night,
The lordë's steward, (God give him mischance)
A thief, that had reneyed⁶ our creance,⁷
Came into the ship alone, and said he would
Her leman be, whether she would or n'ould.

⁵ Gaze.

⁶ Denied.
⁷ Faith.

Woe was this wretched woman then begone, 5338
 Her childë cried, and she cried piteously:
 But blissful Mary holp her right anon,
 For with her struggling well and mightily
 The thief fell overboard all suddenly,
 And in the sea he drenched¹ for vengeance,
 And thus hath Christ unwemmed² kept Custance.

¹ Drowned.² Unspotted.³ Weakened.
⁴ Ruin.

O foulë lust of luxury! lo thine end,
 Not only that thou faintest³ manne's mind,
 But verily thou wilt his body shend.⁴
 Th' endë of thy work, or of thy lustës blind,
 Is complaining: how many may men find,
 That not for work sometime, but for th' intent 5350
 To do this sin, be either slain or shent?

⁵ Struck dead.
⁶ So slenderly armed.

How may this weakë woman have the strength
 Her to defend against this renegade?
 O Gólias, unmeasurable of length,
 How mightë David maken thee so mate?⁵
 So young, and of armour so desolate,⁶
 How durst he look upon thy dreadful face?
 Well may men see it was but Godde's grace.

Who gave Judith couráge or hardness
 To slay him, Holofernes, in his tent, 5360
 And to deliver out of wretchedness
 The people of God? I say for this intent,
 That right as God spirit of vigour sent
 To them, and saved them out of mischance,
 So sent he might and vigour to Custance.

⁷ Gibraltar.
⁸ Ceuta.

Forth go'th her ship throughout the narrow mouth
 Of Jubaltare⁷ and Septe,⁸ driving alway,

Sometimë west, and sometime north and south, 5368
 And sometime east, full many a weary day:
 Till Christë's mother (blessed be she aye)
 Hath shapen¹ through her endëless goodness
 To make an end of all her heaviness.

¹ Prepared.

Now let us stint of Custance but a throw,²
 And speak we of the Roman Emperoúr,
 That out of Surrie hath by letters know
 The slaughter of Christian folk, and dishonoúr
 Done to his daughter by a false traitoúr,
 I mean the cursed wicked Soudaness,
 That at the feast let slay both more and less.

² Little time.

For which this emperor hath sent anon 5380
 His senator, with royal ordinance,
 And other lordës, God wot, many one,
 On Surriens to taken high vengeance:
 They brennen,³ slay, and bring them to mischance
 Full many a day: but shortly this is th' end,
 Homeward to Rome they shapen them to wend.

³ Burn.

This senator repaireth with victory
 To Romë-ward, sailing full royally,
 And met the ship driving, as saith the story,
 In which Custance sitteth full piteously: 5390
 Nothing ne knew he what she was, nor why
 She was in such array, nor she will say
 Of her estate, though that she shouldë dey.⁴

⁴ Die.

He bringeth her to Rome, and to his wife
 He gave her, and her youngë son also:
 And with the senator she led her life.
 Thus can our Lady bringen out of woe

Woeful Custance, and many another mo:
And longē timē dwelled she in that place,
In holy workēs ever, as was her grace.

5398

The senatorē's wife her auntē was,
But for all that she knew her never the more:
I will no longer tarrien in this case,
But to King Alla, which I spake of yore,
That for his wife weepeth and sigheth sore,
I will return, and let¹ I will Custance
Under the senatorē's governance.

¹ Leave.

King Alla, which that had his mother slain,
Upon a day fell in such repentaunce,
That if I shortly tellen shall and plain,
To Rome he cometh to receive his penaunce,
And put him in the Popē's ordinance
In high and low, and Jesus Christ besought,
Forgive his wicked works that he had wrought.

5410

² To meet
him.

The fame anon throughout the town is
borne,
How Alla king shall come on pilgrimage,
By harbingers that wenten him beforne,
For which the senator, as was usāge,
Rode him again,² and many of his lineāge,
As well to shewen his high magnificence,
As to do any king a reverence.

5420

Great cheerē doth this noble senator
To King Alla, and he to him also;
Evereach of them doth other great honour;
And so befell, that in a day or two
This senator is to King Alla go

To feast, and shortly, if I shall not lie,
Custance's son went in his company.

5427

Some men would say at réquest of Custance
This senator hath led this child to feast:
I may not tellen every circumstance,
Be as be may, there was he at the least:
But sooth is this, that at his mother's hest¹
Before Allá, during the meatë's space,
The child stood, looking in the kingë's face.

¹ Com-
mand.

This Alla king hath of this child great wonder,
And to the senator he said anon,
‘Whose is that fairë child that standeth yonder?’
‘I n'ot,’² quod he, ‘by God and by Saint John;
A mother he hath, but father hath he none,
That I of wot.’ but shortly in a stound³
He told Allá how that this child was found.

5440

² Know
not.³ Brief
space.

‘But God wot,’ quod this senator also,
‘So virtuous a liver in all my life
Ne saw I never, as she, nor heard of mo
Of worldly woman, maiden, widow or wife:
I dare well say her haddë lever⁴ a knife
Throughout her breast, than be a woman wick,⁵
There is no man could bring her to that prick.⁶

⁴ Rather.⁵ Wicked.⁶ Point.

Now was this child as like unto Custance
As possible is a créature to be:
This Alla hath the face in remembrance
Of Dame Custance, and thereon mused he,
If that the childë's mother were aught she
That is his wife, and privily he sight,⁷
And sped him from the table that he might.⁸

5450

⁷ Sighed.⁸ As fast
as he
could.

¹ By my
faith.
² A fancy.

'Parfay,'¹ thought he, 'phantom² is in mine head.
I ought to deem of skilful judgēment,
That in the saltē sea my wife is dead.'5458
And afterward he made his argument
'What wot I, if that Christ have hither sent
My wife by sea, as well as he her lent
To my country, from thennēs that she went?'

³ Message.
⁴ With dif-
ficulty.

⁵ Greeted.

And after noon home with the senator
Go'th Alla, for to see this wonder chance.
This senator doth Alla great honour,
And hastily he sent after Custance:
But trusteth well, her listē not to dance.
When that she wistē wherefore was that sond,³
Unneth⁴ upon her feet she mightē stond.5470

⁶ Holiness.
⁷ Surely.

When Alla saw his wife, fair he her gret,⁵
And wept, that it was ruthē for to see,
For at the firstē look he on her set
He knew well verily that it was she:
And she for sorrow, as dumb stands as a tree:
So was her heartē shut in her distress,
When she remember'd his unkindēness.

Twiēs she swooneth in his owen sight,
He weepeth and him excuseth piteously:
'Now God,' quod he, 'and all his hallows⁶ bright
So wisly⁷ on my soul as have mercȳ,
That of your harm as guiltēless am I,
As is Maurfce my son, so like your face,
Ellēs the fiend me fetch out of this place.'

Long was the sobbing and the bitter pain,
Ere that their woful heartēs mightē cease,

Great was the pity for to hear them 'plain,
Through whichē plaintēs 'gan their woe increase.
I pray you all my labour to release,
I may not tell their woe until to-morrow,
I am so weary for to speak of sorrow.

But finally, when that the sooth¹ is wist,²
That Alla guiltēless was of her woe,
I trow an hundred timēs have they kiss'd,
And such a bliss is there betwixt them two,
That save the joy that lasteth evermo,
There is none like, that any creatūre
Hath seen or shall, while that the world may dure.

Then prayed she her husband meekēly
In relief of her longē piteous pine,³ 5500 * Sorrow.
That he would pray her father specially,
That of his majesty he would incline
To vouchēsafe some day with him to dine:
She pray'd him eke, he shoulde by no way
Unto her father no word of her say.

Some men would say, how that the child Maurice
Doth this message until this emperor:
But as I guess, Alla was not so nice,
To him that is so sovereign of honoúr,
As he that is of Christian folk the flower, 5510
Send any child, but it is bet⁴ to deem
He went himself, and so it may well seem.

This emperor hath granted gentilly
To come to dinner, as he him besought:
And well read⁵ I, he looked busily
Upon this child, and on his daughter thought.

¹ Truth.
² Known.

⁴ Better.

⁵ Know.

¹ Skill. Alla go'th to his inn, and as him ought
Arrayed for this feast in every wise,
As farforth as his cunning¹ may suffice. 5517

² Prepare. The morrow came, and Alla 'gan him dress,²
And eke his wife, this emperor to meet:
And forth they ride in joy and in gladness,
And when she saw her father in the street,
She light adown and falleth him to feet.
'Father,' quod she, 'your youngë child Custance
Is now full clean out of your remembrance.'

³ Doomed. 'I am your daughter, your Custance,' quod
she,
'That whilom ye have sent into Surrie;
It am I, father, that in the saltë sea
Was put alone, and damned³ for to die. 5530
Now, goodë father, I you mercy cry,
Send me no more into none heatheness,
But thanketh my lord here of his kindness.'

⁴ Hinder. Who can the piteous joyë tellen all
Betwixt them three, since they been thus ymet?
But of my talë make an end I shall,
The day go'th fast, I will no longer let.⁴
These gladë folk to dinner been yset,
In joy and bliss at meat I let them dwell,
A thousand fold well more than I can tell. 5540

⁵ Since. This child Maurice was sithen⁵ emperör
Made by the Pope, and lived christianly,
To Christë's Churchë did he great honóur:
But I let all his story passen by,
Of Custance is my talë specially,

In the oldë Roman gestës¹ men may find
Maurice's life, I bear it not in mind.

5546 ¹ Exploita.

This King Alla, when he his timë sey,²
With his Custance, his holy wife so sweet,
To England been they come the rightë way,
There as they live in joy and in quiét.
But little while it lasteth I you hete,³
Joy of this world for time will not abide,
From day to night it changeth as the tide.

5550 ² Saw.³ Promise.

Who lived ever in such delight one day,
That him ne moved either conscience,
Or ire, or talent, or some kind affray,⁴
Envy, or pride, or passion, or offence?
I ne say⁵ but for this end this sentence,⁶
That little while in joy or in pleasance
Lasteth the bliss of Alla with Custance.

⁴ Kind of disturbance.⁵ Pronounce.⁶ This judgment.

5560

For death, that taketh of high and low his rent,
When passed was a year, even as I guess,
Out of this world this King Alla he hent,⁷
For whom Custance hath full great heaviness.
Now let us prayen God his soulë bless:
And Dame Custancë, finally to say,
Toward the town of Romë go'th her way.

⁷ Took.

To Rome is come this holy créature,
And findeth there her friendës whole and sound:
Now is she 'scaped all her áventure:⁸
And when that she her father hath yfound,
Down on her kneës falleth she to ground,
Weeping for tenderness in heartë blithe
She herieth⁹ God, an hundred thousand sithe.⁹

5571

⁸ Praiseth.
⁹ Times.

In virtue and in holy almës deed
They liven all, and never asunder wend;
Till death departeth them, this life they lead:
And fareth now well, my tale is at an end.
Now Jesu Christ, that of his might may send
Joy after woe, govérn us in his grace,
And keep us allë that be in this place.

5576

NOTES

ON

THE CANTERBURY TALES.

FOR a grammatical and metrical analysis of the first eighteen lines, see the 'Essay,' &c., p. xcii.-xcv.

Ver. 8. 'Hath in the Ram,' rather, 'the Bull:' See the reasons in the 'Introductory Discourse,' p. cv.

Ver. 13. 'And palmers:' The different sorts of pilgrims are thus distinguished by Dante, 'Vita Nuova,' p. 80:—'Chiamansi palmieri, in quanto vanno oltra mare, laonde molte volte recano la palma;—'Peregrini, in quanto vanno alla casa di Galizia;—'Romei, in quanto vanno a Roma.' But he speaks as an Italian. Chaucer seems to consider all pilgrims to foreign parts as palmers.

Ver. 20. 'The Tabard:' See Mr Speght's note, as cited in the 'Discourse,' &c., note * p. cv.

Ver. 29. 'Well eased,' *Bien aisés*: The latter French usage of 'aise,' sing., and 'aises,' plur., unaccented, seems to be a corruption.

Ver. 33. 'And made forword:' From the Sax. *Fore-word*, promise. Made, contracted from *maked*, is a dissyllable. See ver. 4361.

Ver. 43. 'A knight:' The course of adventures of our knight may be illustrated by those of a real knight of Chaucer's age, who, for anything that appears to the contrary, might have been upon this very pilgrimage. His epitaph is in Leland's 'Itin.,'

v. iii. p. cxi. ‘Icy gist le noble et vaillant Chivaler Matheu de Gourney, &c., qui en sa vie fu a la bataille de Benamaryn, et ala apres a la siege d’Algezire sur les Sarazines, et aussi a les batailles de L’Escluse, de Cressy, de Deyngenesse, de Peyteres, de Nazare, d’Ozrey, et a plusours autres batailles, et assages en les quex il gaigna noblement graunt los et honour.’ He died in 1406, at the age of ninety-six. Why Chaucer should have chosen to bring his knight from Alexandria and Lettowe, rather than from Cressy and Poitiers, is a problem difficult to resolve, except by supposing that the slightest services against infidels were in those days more honourable than the most splendid victories over Christians.

Ver. 48. ‘Ferre,’ i. e. ‘ferer’: The comparative of ‘fer,’ far. So Chaucer uses ‘derre’ for ‘derer,’ the compar. of ‘dere,’ dear, ver. 1450. ‘Ther n’as no man that Theseus hath derre.’ ‘Ferrer’ is used at length by Peter of Langtoft; and ‘ferrest,’ the superl. below, ver. 496.

Ver. 51. ‘At Alisandre:’ Alexandria in Egypt was won, and immediately after abandoned, in 1365, by Pierre de Lusignan, King of Cyprus. The same prince, soon after his accession to the throne, in 1352, had taken Satalie, the ancient Attalia; and in another expedition, about 1367, he made himself master of the town of Layas, in Armenia. Compare, ‘Memoire sur les Ouvrages de Guillaume de Machaut,’ Acad. des Ins. t. xx. p. 426, 432; and ‘Memoire sur la Vie de Philippe de Maizières,’ t. xvii. p. 493. See also ‘Froissart,’ v. iii. p. 21. Walsingham mentions the taking of Alexandria, p. 180, and adds—‘Interfuerunt autem huic captioni cum Rege Cypræ plures Anglici et Aquitanici, referentes tam in Angliam quam in Aquitaniam pannos aureos et holosericos, splendoresque gemmarum exoticos, in testimonium tantæ victoriae.’

V. 52. ‘He had the board begun—in Prusse:’ He had been placed at the head of the table,—the usual compliment to extraordinary merit, as the commentators very properly explain it. When our military men wanted employment, it was usual for them to go and serve in ‘Prusse,’ or Prussia, with the Knights of the Teutonic order, who were in a state of constant warfare with their heathen neighbours in Lettow (Lithuania,) Russe

(Russia,) and elsewhere. A pagan king of Lettow is mentioned by Walsingham, pp. 180, 343.

Ver. 54. 'Reyseyd:' This is properly a German word. Kilian. in v. Reysen, 'iter facere—et Ger. Militare, facere stipendum.' The editions (except M.) and several MSS. have changed it into 'ridden;' which, indeed, seems to have been used by Chaucer in the same sense, ver. 48.

Ver. 56. 'In Gernade:' The city of Algezir was taken from the Moorish king of Granada, in 1344. Mariana, l. xvi. c. xi., among other persons of distinction who came to assist at the siege, in 1343, names particularly, 'de Inglaterra, con licentia del Rey Eduardo, los Condes de Arbid, y de Soluzber;' which, I suppose, we may safely interpret to mean the Earls of Derby and Salisbury. Knighton says that the Earl of Derby was there. 'X Script.', 2583.

Ver. 57. 'In Belmarie:' I cannot find any country of this name in any authentic geographical writer. 'Froissart,' v. iv. c. xxiii., reckons it among the kingdoms of Africa; Thunes, Bougie, Maroch, Bellemarine, Tremessen; and Chaucer, ver. 1772, speaks of it as producing lions. The battle of Benamarin, mentioned in Sir M. Gourney's epitaph, is said by a late author of 'Viage de Espanna,' p. 73, n. 1, to have been so called 'por haber quedado vencido en ella Albohacen, Rey de Marruecos, del linage de Aben Marin.' Perhaps, therefore, the dominions of that family in Africa might be called abusively 'Benamarin,' and by a further corruption 'Belmarie.'

Ver. 59. 'The Great Sea:' This is generally understood to mean the Pontus Euxinus; but I doubt whether the name of 'Mare Maggiore' was given to that sea by any other nation beside the Italians. Sir John Mandeville, p. 89, calls that part of the Mediterranean which washes the coast of Palestine the great sea; an appellation which it might possibly have acquired there, to distinguish it from the two inland seas, as they were improperly styled, the Sea of Tiberias and the Dead Sea.

In MS. T. it is 'the Greekish Sea;' a reading to which I should have had no objection, if I had found it confirmed by any better MS. In the Middle Ages, the Mediterranean Sea, from Sicily to Cyprus, was sometimes called 'Mare Græcum.' (Hove-

den, p. 709.) So Bracton speaks of Essoigns, 'de ultra et de citra Mare Græcorum.' (L. v. Tr. 2. c. 3.) The Sea of Greece is used in the same sense by Chaucer himself, ver. 4884. And in 'Isumbras,' fol. 130. b., 'Tyl he come to the Greekes Sea.'

Ver. 60. 'Noble army:' I have printed this as the most intelligible reading, though I am not quite satisfied with it. The MSS. have 'arme,' 'aryve,' and 'ryver.'

Ver. 65. 'The lord of Palatie:' Palathia in Anatolia. Sp. The nature of his lordship may be explained from Froissart, v. iii. c. 22. He gives an account there of several 'hauts barons' in those parts, who kept possession of their lands, paying a tribute to the Turk. He names particularly 'le Sire de Sathalie, le Sire de la Palice, et le Sire de Haute-Loge.'

Ver. 84. 'Deliver:' Nimble. So below, ver. 15,422—'de-liverly;' nimbly. The word is plainly formed from the Fr. 'libre.' The Italians use 'suelto,' or 'sciolto,' in the same sense.

Ver. 85. 'In chevachie:' Chevauchée, Fr. It most properly means an expedition with a small party of cavalry; but is often used generally for any military expedition. Hollinshed calls it 'a rode.'

Ver. 89. 'Embroidered,' from the Fr. 'Broder,' originally 'Broder.'

Ver. 91. 'Floyting:' Playing on the Flute. So in H. F. iii. 133:—

'And many a "floite" and litlyng horne,
And pipes made of grene corne.'

The first syllable for a time retained the broad sound of its original. See Du Cange, 'Flauta;' Kilian., 'Fluyte.' In some copies it is changed to 'flowting.'

Ver. 97. 'Nightertale:' Night-time; from the Sax. 'nihtern dæl;' 'nocturna portio.' Lydgate uses 'nightertyme.' 'Traged.' fol. 141. b. 156. b.

Ver. 100. 'And carv'd before his father:' The practice of squires, of the highest quality, carving at their fathers' tables, has been fully illustrated by M. de St Palaye, Acad. des Insc. t. xx. p. 604.

Ver. 101. 'A yeoman had he:' The late editions call this

character the ‘Squire’s yeoman,’ but improperly. The pronoun ‘he’ relates to the knight. Chancer would never have given the son an attendant, when the father had none.

‘Yeman,’ or ‘yeoman,’ is an abbreviation of ‘yeongeman,’ as ‘youthe’ is of ‘yeongthe.’ Young men being most usually employed in service, servants have, in many languages, been denominated from the single circumstance of age; as *maius*, ‘puer,’ ‘garçon,’ ‘boy,’ ‘grome.’ As a title of service or office, ‘yoman’ is used in the stat. 37 E. III., c. 9 and 11, to denote a servant of the next degree above a ‘garson,’ or groom; and at this day, in several departments of the royal household, the attendants are distributed into three classes of serjeants or squires, yeomen, and grooms. In the household of the Mayor of London, some officers of the rank of yeoman are still, I believe, called ‘young men.’ See Chamberlain’s ‘State of Great Britain.’

In the statute 20 R. II., c. 2, ‘yomen’ and ‘vadletz’ are synonymous terms. The ‘Canon’s Yeoman,’ who is introduced below, ver. 16,030, is a common servant. See also ver. 2730. The title of ‘yeoman’ was given, in a secondary sense, to people of middling rank, not in service. So the miller, ver. 3947, is careful ‘to saven his estate of yeomanry.’ The appropriation of the word to signify ‘a small landholder,’ is more modern, I apprehend.

Ver. 104. ‘Peacock arrows:’ Arrows with peacock feathers. See Mr Warton’s illustration of this passage, ‘Hist. of Eng. Po.,’ p. 450.

There is a patent in Rymer, 15 R. II., ‘de arte sagittandi, per Valettes Regis, exercenda.’ The yeomen, and all other servants of the royal household, of whatever state or office, under the degree of yeoman, are ordered to carry bows and arrows with them, whenever they ride, &c., in the king’s train.

Ver. 109. ‘A nut-head:’ A head like a nut; from the hair, probably, being cut short. It has since been called a Roundhead, for the same reason.

Ver. 115. ‘A Christopher:’ I do not see the meaning of this ornament. By the stat. 37 E. III., yeomen are forbidden to wear any ornaments of gold or silver.

Ver. 119. ‘Simple and coy:’ V. Saintré, t. iii. p. 577.

Ver. 120. 'St Eloy:' In Latin, 'Sanctus Eligius.' I have no authority but that of Ed. Urr. for printing this saint's name at length. In all the MSS. which I have seen, it is abbreviated, 'St Loy,' both in this place, and in ver. 7146. The metre will be safe, if 'oathe' be pronounced as a dissyllable.

Ver. 124. 'And French she spake:' It has been mentioned before, 'Essay,' &c., n.* p. lxxiii. that Chaucer thought but meanly of the English-French spoken in his time. It was proper, however, that the Prioress should speak some sort of French; not only as a woman of fashion, a character which she is represented to affect, (vers. 139, 140,) but as a religious person. The instructions from the Abbot of St Albans to the nuns of Sopewell, in 1338, were in the French language. See 'Auct. Add. M. Paris,' p. 1171.

Ver. 127. 'At meat:' The following circumstances of behaviour at table are copied from 'Rom. de la R.,' 14,178-14,199:—

'Et bien se garde qu'elle ne moeille
 Ses doys au brouet jusqu' ès jointes, &c.
 Si sagement port sa bouchèe,
 Que sur son pied goutte n'en chèe
 De souuppe, ne de saulse noire.—
 Et doit si bien sa bouche terdre
 Tant qu'el n'y laisse gresse aherdre
 Au moins en la levre desseure.'

Ver. 159. 'Gauded all with green:' Having the gawdies green. Some were of silver gilt, 'Monast.,' v. iii. p. 174: 'Tria paria peculiarium del corall cum le gaudehys argenti deaurata.' (So in Gower, 'Conf. Am.' f. 190)—

'A paire of bedes blacke as sable
 She toke and hyng my neck about.
 Upon the gaudehys all without
 Was wryte of gold, *pur reposer.*'

Ver. 163. 'Another Nun,' &c.: See 'Disc.,' p. cvii.

Ver. 165. 'A fair for the mastery:' We should say, 'a fair one;' but in Chaucer's time such tautology was not, I suppose, elegant. So below, ver. 189—

'Therefore he was a prickasour, a right.'

As to the phrase 'for the mastery,' I take it to be derived from the French 'pour la maistrie,' which I find, in an old book of

physic, applied to such medicines as we usually call ‘sovereign,’ excellent above all others. MS. Bod. 761. ‘Secreta h. Samp de Clowburnel,’ fol. 17 b.: ‘Ciroigne bone pur la maistrie a briser et a meurer apostemes,’ &c.; ‘Medicine magistrel pur festre,’ &c.; ‘Medicine pur la maistrie pur festre,’ &c. And in another treatise in the same MS. ‘Medulla Cirurgiae Rolandi,’ similar phrases are used in Latin, fol. 77: ‘Pocio bona pro magisterio ad vulnera sananda,’ &c. fol. 79; ‘Contra lupum,’ &c., ‘medicamen magistrale.’ In the same sense the monk is said to be fair, ‘for the maistrie,’ above all others. The phrase is used by Robert of Gloucester, p. 553, ‘An stede he gan prikie wel vor the maistrie.’ The several chemical preparations known by the name of magisterium of lead, bismuth, &c., I conceive to have originally acquired that name from their being considered at first as ‘masterly operations.’

Ver. 166. ‘Loved venery:’ i.e., Hunting. If the word in Chaucer’s time had borne any other sense, he would hardly have put it into the mouth of Emily in ver. 2310. The monks of that age are represented as fond of field-sports. See below, vers. 189–192, and P. P. fol. L. a. Knighton says, that an abbot of Leicester, who died in 1377, ‘in venatione leporum inter omnes regni dominos famosissimus et nominatissimus habebatur.’ (*X. Scriptor*, p. 2631.) He adds, indeed, that the abbot was used to assert, what perhaps may have been partly true, ‘se non delectasse in hujusmodi frivolis venationibus, nisi solum pro obsequiis dominis regni præstandis, et affabilitate eorum captandâ, et gratiâ in suis negotiis adipiscendâ.’

Ver. 169. ‘His bridle—jingling:’ See this fashion of hanging bells on bridles, &c., illustrated by Mr Warton, ‘Hist. of Eng. Po.,’ p. 164. See also below, vers. 14,800, 14,801.

Ver. 177. ‘A pulled hen:’ See below, ver. 6694—

‘Such arrogance n’is not worth an hen.’

I do not see much force in the epithet, ‘pulled.’ Ca. 1 reads, ‘pullet.’

Ver. 179. ‘When he is reckless:’ MS. C. reads, ‘cloisterless,’ to which the only objection is, that, if it had been the true reading, there would have been no occasion to explain or para-

phrase it in ver. 181. The text alluded to is attributed by Gratian ('Decret.', P. ii. Cau. xvi. Q. 1. c. viii.,) to a Pope Eugenius.—'Sicut piscis sine aquâ caret vitâ, ita sine monasterio monachus.' In 'P. P.,' according to MS. Cotton. Vesp. B. xvi. (for the passage is omitted in the printed editions,) a similar saying is quoted from Gregory :—

'Gregori the grete clerk garte write in bokes
The rewle of alle religiou[n] rytful and obedient
Riyt as fishes in a fiod whan hem faileth water
Deien for drowthe whan thei drie liggen
Riyt so religious roten and sterven
That out of covent or cloistre coveiten to dwelle.'

As the known senses of 'rekkeles,' viz., 'careless,' 'negligent,' by no means suit with this passage, I am inclined to suspect that Chaucer possibly wrote 'reghelles,' i. e., without rule. 'Regol,' from 'regula,' was the Saxon word for a 'rule,' and particularly for a monastic rule. Hence, 'Regol-lif,' regularis seu monastica vita; 'regol-lage,' regularium lex; and in the quotation from 'Orm,' 'Essay,' &c., note * p. lxxi., 'an reghelboc' signifies 'the book of rules,' by which the Augustinian canons were governed.

Ver. 187. 'As Austin bit,' i. e., 'biddeth:' Chaucer frequently abbreviates the third person sing. of the present tense in this manner. See vers. 976, 983, 'rit' for 'rideth;' vers. 4069, 15,686, 'fint' for 'findeth;' ver. 4191, 'rist' for 'riseth;' vers. 5038, 5071, 5075, 'stant' for 'standeth;' ver. 7239, 'sit' for 'sitteth;' ver. 7998, 'smit' for 'smiteth.'

Ver. 193. 'His sleeves purfiled:' from the Fr. 'pourfiler,' which properly signifies, 'to work upon the edge.' 'Pur,' Eng., and 'pour,' Fr., are generally corruptions of the Latin 'pro.'

It is not clear what species of fur the 'gris' was, only that it was one of the better sorts. (See Du Cange in v. 'Griseum.') If it was the same with 'vair,' commonly called 'menever,' i. e., 'menu vair,' as he supposes, it was probably next in esteem to ermine. See the statute 37 E. III., c. 10 and 12. One of Wolsey's ordinances for the reformation of the Augustinian monks, in 1519, is directed against the foppery here described. 'In manicis sub nullo modo furfuris utantur aut pellibus, nisi

prout iis permisum est in statutis Benedictinis.' ('Monast.', v. ii. p. 567.)

Ver. 203. 'His boots souple:' This is part of the description of a smart abbot by an anonymous writer of the thirteenth century: 'Ocreas habebat in cruribus, quasi innatae essent, sine plicâ porrectas.' (MS. Bod., James, n. 6, p. 121.)

Ver. 233. 'Farsed:' 'Stuffed;' from the Fr. 'farcir.'

Ver. 237. 'Of yeddings:' This word being not understood, has been changed in some copies into 'tidinges,' and 'weddinges.' It probably means 'a kind of song,' from the Sax. 'geddian,' or 'giddian,' to sing. See the Saxon Boethius, cap. i. l. ult., where the words 'thus singende cuæth' are rendered in the poetical version, p. 152, 'gyddode thus.' See more instances in Lye's 'Sax. Dict.' The Saxon σ passes frequently into 'y.'

Ver. 256. '*In principio*:' This phrase is commonly explained to refer to the beginning of St John's Gospel. It may also refer to the beginning of Genesis. In an old French romance, 'L'Histoire des Trois Maries,' it seems to signify some passage in the conclusion of the mass, Acad. des Ins., t. xiii. p. 521—

‘Moult aise sui quant audio
Le prestre dire, *In principio*,
Car la messe si est finee.’

It is not very material in which of these senses it is understood, either here or in ver. 15,169.

Ver. 258. 'His purchase was,' &c.: From the 'Rom. de la R.' 12,288—

‘Mieux vault mon pourchas que ma rente.’

See R. R. 6838.

Ver. 260. 'In love-days:' A day appointed for the amicable settlement of differences was called 'a love-day.' Bracton, l. v. fol. 369: 'Si ante judicium capiatur Dies Amoris.'—'Rot. Parl.' 13 H. IV., n. 13: 'Agayn the fourme of "a love-day" taken bytwen the same parties.' The glossary calls them, improperly, 'meetings for pleasure and diversion.' They were meetings for business; though it is probable that the business, when finished, was usually followed by a treat given to the arbitrators, &c. See

the ‘Parl. Roll,’ quoted above. In ‘P. P.,’ fol. xxvii., Sloth, in the character of a priest, says—

‘I can holde love-dayes, and here a reves rekenyng,
And in canon or in decretals I cannot read a lyne.’

Ver. 278. ‘The sea were kept,’ i. e., ‘guarded.’ The old subsidy of tonnage and poundage was given to the king ‘pur la saufgarde et custodie del mer.’ (12 E. IV., c. 3.)

Ver. 292. ‘His overest courtepy :’ His uppermost short cloak of coarse cloth. (See ver. 6964; and ‘P.P.,’ fol. xxxiii. b. l. ult.)—

‘And kyt her copes and courtepies hem made.’

It is a Teutonic word, from ‘kort,’ ‘curtus,’ and ‘pije,’ ‘penula coactilis, ex villis crassioribus.’ (Kilian in vv.)

Ver. 300. ‘Yet hadde he :’ ‘Hadde’ is here to be pronounced as a dissyllable, the ‘h’ in ‘he’ being considered as a consonant. So below, ver. 388. See also vers., 9859, 11,784, 11,804, 12,532, 12,834; in all which instances, and many others, the ‘e’ feminine is to be pronounced before ‘h.’

304. ‘To scolay :’ ‘To attend school ;’ from the old French verb, ‘escoolioir.’ It is used in the same sense by Lydgate, ‘Traged.’ fol. 99. So Chaucer uses to ‘werreie,’ vers. 10,324, 14,338, and to ‘festeye,’ ver. 10,659, from ‘guerroier’ and ‘festoier.’

Ver. 307. ‘In form and reverence :’ With propriety and modesty. In the next line, ‘full of high sentence’ means only, I apprehend, ‘full of high, or excellent, sense.’ Mr Warton will excuse me for suggesting these explanations of this passage in lieu of those which he has given in his ‘Hist. of Eng. Po.,’ p. 451. The credit of good letters is concerned, that Chaucer should not be supposed to have made ‘a pedantic formality,’ and ‘a precise, sententious style on all subjects,’ the characteristics of a scholar.

Ver. 322. ‘In suspect :’ In suspicion. See vers. 8781, 12,197.

Ver. 331. ‘A seint of silk with barres small :’ It appears, from our author’s translation of ‘R. R.’ ver. 1103, that ‘barres’ were called ‘cloux’ in French, and were a usual ornament of a girdle. See Mr. Warton’s ‘Hist.,’ pp. 377, 426. ‘Clavus’ in Latin, from whence the Fr. ‘cloux’ is derived, seems to have signified not only an outward ‘border,’ but also what we call a

'stripe.' (Montfaucon, t. iii. part i. ch. vi.) A 'bar' in heraldry is a narrow 'stripe,' or 'fascia.' Du Cange, in v. Clavatus, quotes the Statut. Andegav., an. 1423, in which the clergy, and especially the regulars, are forbid to wear 'zonas aura clavatas.'

Ver. 333. 'A Frankelin.' Fortescue ('De L. L. Ang.', c. 29) describes a 'franklin' to be a 'paterfamilias—magnis ditatus possessionibus.' He is classed with, but after, the 'miles' and 'armiger,' and is distinguished from the 'libere tenentes' and 'valecti,' though, as it should seem, the only real distinction between him and other 'freeholders' consisted in the largeness of his estate. Spelman, in v. Franklin, quotes the following passage from Trivet's 'French Chronicle,' MS. Bibl. R. S. n. 56:—'Thomas de Brotherton, filius Edwardi I., Mareschallus Angliae, apres la mort de son pere sposa la fille de un Francheleyn apelee Alice.' The historian did not think it worth his while even to mention the name of the Franklin.

Ver. 342. 'Saint Julian' was eminent for providing his votaries with good lodgings and accommodation of all sorts. In the title of his 'Legende,' MSS. Bod., 1596, fol. 4, he is called 'St Julian, the gode herberjour.' It ends thus:—

'Therfore yet to this day thei that over lond wende,
Thei biddeth Saint Julian anon that gode herborw he hem sende,
And Saint Julianes paternoster ofte seggeth also,
For his fader soul and his moderes, that he hem bring therto.'

For the virtue of Saint Julian's paternoster see the 'Decameron,' D. ii. N. 2.

Ver. 344. 'Envined;' Stored with wine. Cotgrave has preserved the French word 'enviné' in the same sense. This is the reading of MSS. Ask., 1, 2, and others. The common editions read 'viendid.'

Ver. 357. 'At sessions:' At the sessions of the peace. The justices, by the stat. 34 E. III., c. 1, were to be, in each county, 'un seigneur et ovesque lui trois ou quatre des meultz vausez du countee, ensemblement ove ascuns sages de la ley.' A wealthy franklin might perhaps be commissioned under this description; but I know not how he could be a knight of the shire; as they, by 46 E. III., were to be 'chivalers et serjantz des meulx vausez du pais;' unless we suppose, either that the rank of 'serjant'

(esquire) was as undefined as it is now, or that his office of justice made him an esquire within the meaning of the act.

Ver. 358. 'An anlace:' See the Gloss. to M. Paris in v. Anelacius. It was a kind of 'knife,' or 'dagger,' usually worn at the girdle. In that passage of M. Paris, p. 342, where Petrus de Rivallis is mentioned as 'gestans anelacium ad lumbare, quod clericum non decebat,' it may be doubted whether the wearing of an anlace simply, or the wearing of it at the girdle, was an indecent thing in the clerk. The five city mechanics, a few lines below, are described as wearing knives, and probably at their girdles (see v. 370,) though the latter circumstance is not clearly expressed. In the picture of Chaucer, which is inserted in some copies of Occleve's book, 'De Regimine Principis,' he is represented with a knife hanging from a button upon his breast. See MSS. Harl. 4866, Cotton. Otho. A. xviii.

Ver. 358. 'A gipciere:' Fr. 'gibeciere,' a purse. The mechanics, ver. 370, have also their 'pouches.'

Ver. 360. 'A countour:' This word has been changed in Ed. Urr., upon what authority I know not, to 'coroner.' The MSS. all read 'countour,' or 'comptour.' At the same time it is not easy to say what office is meant. I have a notion that the foreman of the inquest in the hundred-court was called a 'countour,' but the law glossaries do not take notice of any such sense of the word, and I cannot at present produce anything stronger in support of it than the following passage of 'R. G.', p. 538. Speaking of an hundred-court summoned by the constable of Gloucester Castle, he says that

'He held this hundred mid gret folk and honour,
And Adam of Arderne was [his] chef countour.'

Though this may possibly mean that Adam acted as 'accomptant' or 'steward' of the court.

Ver. 361. 'Vavasour:' The precise import of this word is often as obscure as its original. (See Du Cange in v.) In this place it should perhaps be understood to mean the whole class of middling landholders.

Ver. 371. 'On the dais:' This word occurs so frequently in our old authors, that it may be worth the while to endeavour to give a more satisfactory explanation of it than is to be found in

the glossaries. I apprehend that it originally signified the 'wooden floor' ['d'ais,' Fr., 'de assibus,' Lat.] which was laid at the upper end of the hall, as we still see it in college halls, &c. That part of the room, therefore, which was floored with planks, was called the 'dais,' the rest being either the bare ground, or at best paved with stone, and being raised above the level of the other parts, it was often called the 'high dais.' In royal halls there were more dais than one, each of them probably raised above the other by one or more steps; and that where the king sat was called 'the highest dais.' At a dinner which Charles V. of France gave to the emperor Charles IV., in 1377, Christine de Pisan says, 'Hist. de Ch.' V. P. iii. c. 33:—'Cinq dois [dais] avoit en la sale plains de princes et de barons, et autres tables par-tout; et estoient les deux grans dois et les dreçouers fais de barrières a l'environ.'

As the principal table was always placed upon a dais, it began very soon, by a natural abuse of words, to be called itself a dais, and people were said to sit 'at the dais,' instead of 'at the table upon the dais.' It was so in the time of M. Paris, 'Vit. Abb,' p. 1070: 'Priore prandente ad magnam mensam, quam deis vocamus.'

Menage, whose authority seems to have led later antiquaries to interpret dais, a 'canopy,' has evidently confounded dais with 'ders.' 'Ders' and 'derselet,' from 'dorsum,' as he observes, meant properly the hangings at the back of the company, (Du Cange, v. Dorsale); but as the same hangings were often drawn over so as to form a kind of canopy over their heads, the whole was called a 'ders.' Christine, P. iii. c. 41:—'Sus chascun des trois (the emperor and the kings of France and Bohemia) avoit un ciel, distincte l'un de l'autre, de drap d'or à fleurs de lis; et pardessus ces trois en avoit un grant, qui couvroit tout au long de la table, et tout derrière eux pendoit, et estoit de drap d'or.' This last 'ciel,' or canopy, 'which covered the whole length of the table, and hung down behind the company,' was a 'ders.' That it was quite a different thing from a 'deis,' appears from what follows:—'A l'autre dois [dais] au plus près (she says) seoit —le Dauphin' and others. 'Et sus le chief du Dauphin avoit un ciel, et puis un autre pardessus qui toute la table couvroit.'

'Dais' here plainly means 'a table.' The dauphin sat at the second table, and had a canopy over his own head, and another which covered the whole table. In short, one of Menage's own citations, if properly corrected, will fully establish the distinct senses of these two words. 'Ceremon. de Godefroy,' p. 335:— 'Le roy se vint mettre à table sur un haut ders (read, deis) fait et préparé en la grande salle du logis archiepiscopal, sous un grand ders, le fond du quel estoit tout d'or.' He has another citation from Martene, ('De Mon. Rit.' l. i. c. xi. p. 109,) in which he himself allows, that 'dasium,' the same as dais, must signify 'un estrade,' a raised floor. It appears from the same citation, that the ascent to the 'dasium' was by more steps than one.

See below, vers. 2202, 9585, 10,373, and Gower, ('Conf. Am.' fol. 155. a.)—'Sittende upon the hie deis.'

Ver. 381. 'For the nones:' That is, as I conceive, 'for the occasion.' This phrase, which was very frequently, though not always very precisely, used by our old writers, I suppose to have been originally a corruption of corrupt Latin. From 'pro-nunc,' I suppose, came 'for the nunc,' and so 'for the nonce;' just as from 'ad-nunc' came 'a-non.' The Spanish 'entonces' has been formed in the same manner from 'in-tunc.'

I have repeated this note from the last edition of Shakspeare, vol. v. p. 239, as I have not found any reason to alter my opinion with respect to the original of this phrase. I will add here a list of several passages in these tales, in which it is used in the same sense. See vers. 525, 547, 3469, 13,948, 15,339. See also 'R. G.,' p. 285—

'And he hadde vor the nones tweye cuerdes by hys syde.'

Ver. 383. 'And powder merchant:' What kind of ingredient this was I cannot tell. Cotgrave mentions a 'pouldre blanche' and a 'pouldre de duc,' which seem both to have been used in cookery. I must take notice, that the epithet 'tart,' in most of the MSS., is annexed to 'powder merchant,' and I rather wish I had left it there, as, for anything that I know, it may suit that as well as 'galingale.'

Ver. 384. 'London ale:' Whether this was a different sort of ale from that of the provinces, or only better made, I know not;

but it appears to have been in request above a century after Chaucer. In the account of the feast of Archbishop Warham, in 1504, are the following articles, ('Lel. Collect.', App. P. ii. p. 30):—

- ‘De cervisia Londini iiiii. dol.—vi li.
- ‘De cervisia Cant. vi. dol. prec. dol. xxv s.
- ‘De cervisia Ang. Bere xx. dol. prec. dol. xxiii s. iv d.’

So that London ale was higher priced than Kentish by 5s. a barrel.

Ver. 386. ‘Maken mortrewes:’ Lord Bacon, in his ‘Nat. Hist.’ i. 48, speaks of ‘a mortress made with the brawn of capons stamped and strained.’ He joins it with the cullice (coulis) of cocks. It seems to have been a rich broth, or soup, in the preparation of which the flesh was stamped, or beat, in a mortar; from whence it probably derived its name, ‘une mortreuse;’ though I cannot say that I have ever met with the French word.

Ver. 388. ‘A mormal:’ A cancer, or gangrene. So the Gloss, and I believe Chaucer meant no more, by his confining the disease to the shin. The original word ('Malum mortuum,' Lat., 'Mauxmorz,' Fr.) seems to have signified a kind of dead palsy, which took away entirely the use of the legs and feet. Du Cange, in v. *Malum mortuum*. Jonson, in imitation of this passage, has described a cook with an ‘old mortmal on his shin.’ ('Sad Shepherd.' A. ii. S. vi.)

Ver. 393. ‘All in a gown of falding:’ I have added ‘all,’ for the sake of the verse, but perhaps unnecessarily, as some of the MSS. read—

‘In a goun of falding unto the knee.’

The reader has been forewarned, ('Essay,' &c., p. xci.) that Chaucer is not always correct in the disposition of his accents.

Ver. 400. ‘Of nice conscience:’ H. Stephens informs us that ‘nice’ was the old French word for ‘niais,’ one of the synonyms of ‘sot,’ ('Apol. Herod.,' l. i. c. 4.) Our author uses it elsewhere in its original sense for foolish, (ver. 6520,)—

‘But say that we ben wise, and nothing nice.’

Ver. 405. ‘His herberow, his moon:’ In ver. 11,347, he uses ‘herberow’ for ‘the place of the sun,’ which perhaps it may signify here. ‘Lodemanager’ seems to be formed, as the Gloss.

observes, by adding a French termination to the Saxon ‘ladman,’ a guide, or pilot. It would have been more English to have said ‘lodmanship,’ as ‘seamanship,’ ‘horsemanship, &c. From the same property of leading, the north-star, in ver. 2061, is called the ‘lodestar;’ and hence also our name of ‘loadstone’ for the magnet.

Ver. 418. ‘By his magic natural:’ The same practices are alluded to in ‘H. F.’ iii. 175:—

‘And clerkes eke, which conne well
All this magyke naturell,
That crafteily do her intentes
To maken in certayne ascendentes
Ymages, lo! through which magyke
To maken a man ben hole or seke.’

Ver. 433. ‘Old Hippocras:’ Whoever is curious to know more of the physicians mentioned in this catalogue may consult the account of authors, &c., in Ed. Urr.—(‘Fabric. Bibl. Med. Æt.’)—and the ‘Elench. Medicor. Vet. ap. eund. Bibl. Gr.’ t. xiii. I shall only observe that the names of ‘Hippocras,’ or ‘Ypocras,’ and ‘Gallien’ were used, even by the Latin writers of the Middle Ages, for Hippocrates and Galen. See the inscriptions in the Library at St. Albans, ‘Monast.’ t. i. p. 184—

‘Magnus eram medicus, Hypocras sum nomine dictus.
Alter et egregius vocitatus eram Galienus.’

See below, ver. 12,240.

Ver. 459. ‘Moist and new:’ Moist is here used in a peculiar sense, as derived from ‘musteus;’ for, according to Nonius, 2. 518:—‘Mustum, non solum vinum, verum etiam novellum quiquid est, recte dicitur.’ So in ver. 17,009, ‘moisty ale’ is opposed to ‘old.’

Ver. 464. ‘As nouth:’ The use of ‘nouth’ for ‘now’ in this place has so much the appearance of a botch, that it may be proper to observe that the word was in use before Chaucer’s time. (See ‘R. G.,’ pp. 455, 458.) In the latter instance it is in the middle of the verse.

Ver. 470. ‘Gat-toothed:’ Whether we read thus, with the generality of the MSS., or ‘cat-toothed,’ with MSS. Ask., 1. 2, or ‘gap-toothed,’ with Ed. Urr., I confess myself equally unable

to explain what is meant by this circumstance of description. The Wife uses the phrase when speaking of herself, in ver. 6185.

Ver. 528. ‘Spiced conscience:’ This phrase occurs again, ver. 6017, but I do not understand it. (See B. and F. ‘Mad Lover,’ Act 3.)

Ver. 550. ‘The ram:’ This was the usual prize at wrestling-matches. (See below, ver. 13,671, and Gamelyn, vers. 343, 555.) M. Paris mentions a wrestling-match at Westminster, in the year 1222, at which a ram was the prize (p. 265.)

Ver. 562. ‘A goliardeis:’ ‘Un goliardois,’ Fr.; ‘goliardus,’ or ‘goliardensis,’ Lat. This jovial sect seems to have been so called from Golias, the real or assumed name of a man of wit, toward the end of the twelfth century, who wrote the ‘Apocalypse Goliae,’ and other pieces, in burlesque Latin rhymes, some of which have been falsely attributed to Walter Map. (See Tanner’s ‘Bibl. Brit.’ in v. Golias, and Du Cange in v. Goliardus.) There is a poem by one of this sect, in MS. Bod. 3869, James 32, which is entitled, ‘Dicta cujusdam Goliardi Anglici,’ and begins thus:—

‘Omnibus in Galliā, Anglus Goliardus,
Obediens et humilis, frater non bastardus,
Goliæ discipulus, dolens quod tam tardus,
Mandat salutem fratribus, nomine Richardus.’

The last stanza is this:—

‘Summa salus omnium, filius Maris,
Pascat, potet, vestiat pueros Goliae,
Et conservet socios sanctæ confrariæ
Ad dies usque ultimos Enoch et Elyæ.’

In several authors of the thirteenth century, quoted by Du Cange, the ‘goliardi’ are classed with the ‘joculatores et bufones.’

Ver. 565. ‘A thumb of gold:’ If the allusion be, as is most probable, to the old proverb, ‘Every honest miller has a thumb of gold,’ this passage may mean, that our miller, notwithstanding his thefts, was an honest miller, i. e., as honest as his brethren.

Ver. 588. ‘Set their aller cap:’ ‘Aller’ is the genitive plural of ‘alle,’ from the Sax. ‘ealra.’ ‘Their aller’ would be properly rendered in Latin, ‘eorum omnium.’ (See the

'Essay,' &c., note † p. liv.) 'To set a man's cap,' is the same as 'to make a fool of him.' See ver. 3145—

'How that a clerk hath set the wrightēs cap.'

Ver. 617. 'A right good stot:' I take 'stot' to be put here for 'stod,' the Saxon word for a stallion. A stot signified properly a bullock, as it still does in the North. (See the Percy 'Housh Book,' p. 2, and note.) The passage which Du Cange, in v. Stottus, has quoted from Maddox, 'Form. Angl.' p. 427, to shew that 'stottus' signifies 'equus admissarius,' proves, rather, that it signifies a bullock. John de Nevill leaves to his eldest son several specific legacies, 'et eciam CC vaccas pro stauro, CC stottos et stirkes, MM bidentes,' &c. 'Stirke' is the Saxon name for a heifer, so that there can be little doubt that 'CC stottos et stirkes' should be rendered 'CC bullocks and heifers.'

Ver. 627. 'Cherubinnes face:' H. Stephens ('Apol. Herod.', l. i. c. xxx.,) quotes the same thought from a French epigram:—
'Nos granda docteurs au cherubin visage,' &c.

Ver. 627. 'Sausefleme:' I find this word in an old French book of physic, which I have quoted before in note on ver. 165—'Oignement magistrel pur sausefleme et pur chescune manere de roigne.' 'Roigne' signifies any scorbutic eruption. So in the 'Thousand Notable Things,' B. i. 70—'A "sawsfleme," or red, pimpled face, is helped with this medicine following.' Two of the ingredients are quicksilver and brimstone. In another place, B. ii. 20, 'oyle of tartar' is said 'to take away cleane all spots, freckles, and filthy wheales.' These last, I suppose, are what Chaucer calls 'whelkes.' The original of the word seems to be pointed out in the following passage ('Vit. R. ii. a Mon. Evesh.' p. 169)—'Facies albo—interdum sanguinis fleumate viciata.'

Ver. 648. 'Questio quid juris:' This kind of question occurs frequently in Ralph de Hengham. After having stated a case, he adds, 'Quid juris?' and then proceeds to give the answer to it: (See 'Heng. Mag.', c. xi. :)—'Esto autem quod reus nullo modo venerit ad hunc diem. quid juris?' &c. (See also, c. xii.)

Ver. 649. 'A gentle harlot:' The name of harlot was anciently given to men as well as women. (See below, vers. 4266, 7336.) 'Herlod,' in Welsh, is said to signify simply a young man, and 'herlodes,' a young woman, (Richards, 'Welsh Dict.,' in v.)

With us it seems always to have been a disgraceful appellation. In 'R. R.,' ver. 6068, 'king of harlots' is Chaucer's translation of 'roy des ribaulx.'

Ver. 664. '*A significavit:*' The writ *de excommunicato capiendo*, commonly called a 'significavit,' from the beginning of the writ, which is as follows:—'Rex Vicecomiti L. salutem. Significavit nobis venerabilis pater H. L. Episcopus,' &c. ('Cod. Jur. Ecc.,' p. 1054.)

Ver. 665. 'In danger had he:' *i. e.*, Within the reach, or control, of his office. See 'Hist. Abbat. Pipwell. ap. Monast. Angl.,' t. i. p. 815:—'Nec audebant Abbates eidem resistere, quia aut pro denariis aut pro bladis semper fuerunt Abbates in dangerio dicti Officialis.'

'The young girls,' in the next line, may signify either the young men or the young women; as girl was formerly an appellation common to both sexes.

Ver. 672. 'Of Rouncevall:' I can hardly think that Chaucer meant to bring his pardoner from Roncevaux in Navarre, and yet I cannot find any place of that name in England. An 'Hospital Beatae Mariæ de Runcyvalle, in Charing, London,' is mentioned in the 'Monast.,' t. ii. p. 443; and there was a 'Runceval Hall' in Oxford, (Stevens, v. ii. p. 262.) So that perhaps it was the name of some fraternity.

Ver. 674. 'Come hither, love, to me:' This, I suppose, was the beginning, or the burthen, of some known song.

'Love,' is here a dissyllable, as in ver. 260—

'In lovē-days, there could he muchel help;'

and in ver. 1627—

'Full sooth is said, that lovē ne lordship'

The double rhyme of 'tomē,' answering to 'Romē,' proves evidently that Rome in this place is to be pronounced as a dissyllable. We need, therefore, have no scruple, I think, of pronouncing it in the same manner wherever the metre requires two syllables. See vers. 4562, 4576, 5388, 5568.

A like use may be made of other similar rhymes in Chaucer for establishing the pronunciation of the 'e' feminine. In ver. 16,673, 'by me' rhymes to 'time,' and in Tro. ii. 691, to 'time'

and ‘prime;’ and accordingly, both ‘time’ and ‘prime’ are used in other places as dissyllables. See vers. 7884, 10,827–10,674, 12,596.

In these cases the final monosyllable ‘me’ transfers its accent to the preceding syllable, after the manner of the Greek enclitics, and the final ‘e’ of course becomes a mere ‘e’ feminine.

Ver. 675. ‘Bare—a stiff burdoun :’ ‘Sang the base.’ See ver. 4163, and Du Cange, in v. Burdo.

Ver. 684. ‘The new gete :’ The new fashion. ‘Gette,’ or ‘jett,’ for the MSS. differ, is used in the same sense by Occleve, ‘De Reg. Princ.,’ MSS. Bod., 1504, 1786—

Also there is another *newe gette*,
All foule waste of cloth and excessif.’

Ver. 689. ‘Bret-full of pardon :’ This is the reading of all the MSS.; and the same expression occurs, in the same sense, in v. 2166, and in F. III., 1033.

Ver. 710. ‘A noble ecclesiast :’ It appears from hence that the Pardoner was an itinerant ecclesiastic, of much the same stamp with Frate Cipolla in the ‘Decameron,’ vi. 10. By the stat. 22 H. VIII., c. 12, all proctors and pardoners going about in any country, without sufficient authority, are to be treated as vagabonds. Their impositions upon the credulity of the vulgar have been checked by several councils. See Du Cange, in v. Quæstiarii and Quæstionarius, under which general names the vendors of indulgences are included.

Ver. 743. ‘Eke Plato sayeth :’ This saying of Plato is quoted again ver. 17,156. Our author probably took it from Boethius, B. iii. Pr. 12. See also ‘Rom. de la R.,’ ver. 7465.

Ver. 761. ‘Amonges :’ I have ventured to lengthen the common reading ‘among’ by a syllable, as the metre requires it, and Chaucer uses the word so lengthened in other places. See ver. 6534—

‘Ovid, amonges other things smale ;’
and ver. 9902—

‘Amonges other of his honest thinges.’

I suspect that the Saxon ‘gemang’ had originally a termination in ‘an,’ ‘gemangan,’ like many other of the Saxon adverbs and prepositions.

Ver. 787. ‘To make it wise :’ To make it a matter of wisdom,

or deliberation. So in ver. 3978, 11,535, ‘he made it strange’ signifies, ‘he made it a matter of difficulty.’

Ver. 792. ‘This is the point:’ See the ‘Discourse,’ &c., § VII.

Ver. 812. ‘And our oaths swore’ *i. e.*, and we swore our oaths and prayed him, &c. It is too frequent a practice with our author to omit the governing pronoun before his verbs. See below, ver. 1757:—‘And saw’ for, ‘and they saw;’ ver. 5042, ‘and sayn,’ for, ‘and they sayn;’ ver. 5054, ‘and yet li’th,’ for ‘and yet he li’th;’ ver. 6123, ‘and blamed himself,’ for, ‘and ‘he blamed himself;’ ver. 6398, ‘and made him,’ for, ‘and I made him.’

Ver. 819. ‘In high and low:’ ‘*In*,’ or ‘*de alto et basso*.’ Barb. Lat., ‘*Haut et bas*,’ Fr., were expressions of entire submission on one side, and sovereignty on the other. So ‘P. L.,’ p. 283, speaking of the Pope, says ‘He selle at his dome set it lowe and hie.’ See Du Cange, in v.

Ver. 827. ‘A little more than pace:’ A pace, with Chaucer, means always, I believe, a foot-pace. See ver. 2899—‘And riden forth a pace;’ and ver. 12,800—‘Then thou wilt go a pace not but a mile.’ See also ver. 16,043, ‘more than trot or pace.’

Ver. 837. ‘Now draweth cut:’ Draweth is the second person plural of the imperative mode. See the ‘Essay,’ &c., note * p. lvii. The ceremony of ‘drawing cut’ occurs again, ver. 12,727, seq. Froissart calls it ‘*tirer à la longue paille*.’ (V. i c. 294.)

Ver. 868. ‘The regne of feminie:’ The kingdom of the Amazons. So Penthesilea is called by Gower ‘the Queen of Feminee.’ (‘Conf. Am.’ fol. 75, a 97 b.)

Ver. 886. ‘And of the temple:’ The editions, and all the MSS. except two, read ‘tempest.’ But the ‘Theseida’ says nothing of any tempest. On the contrary, it says, that the passage—

‘Tosto fornito fu et senza pene.’

I have, therefore, preferred the reading of MSS. C. i. and HA., as Theseus is described making his offerings, &c., upon his return, in a temple of Pallas. (‘Thes.,’ l. ii.)

Ver. 907–913. Imitated from the ‘Theseida’:—

‘Chi son costoro, che a nostri lieti aventi
Cum crini sparti, batendose el pecto,

Di squalor piene in altri obscuri vestimenti,
 Tutte piangendo, come se in despecto
 Havessen la mia gloria e l'altre genti.'

The third line, I suspect, should be read thus—

'Di squalor piene in atri vestimenti.'

'Obscuri' was a gloss for 'atri.'

Ver. 911. 'Misboden:' Injured. So in a charter of Canute to the Church of St. Paul, ('Monast.', v. iii. p. 304,) 'That nan man—heom misbeode.'

Ver. 940. 'Wala wa:' I shall take the liberty of constantly representing this interjection in this simple form, though in the MSS. it is written very differently; 'walaway,' 'weilaway,' 'welaway,' &c., from whence the more modern vulgar 'weladay.' 'Wa' and 'la' are both Saxon interjections of grief. The compound 'wala wa' is used in 'Chr. Saxon,' Gibs., p. 191.

Ver. 970. 'No nere Athenes:' 'Nere' is used for 'nerre,' and that for 'nerer,' the comparative of 'ner.' So ver. 1852, 'ferre ne nere;' ver. 13,450, 'nere and nere;' ver. 16,189, 'never the nere.'

Ver. 981. 'Y-beat:' Probably, 'stamped;' that operation being anciently, I suppose, performed by the hammer. (See vers. 11,948, 11,951.)

Ver. 1016. 'And he that other:' 'He' is inserted for the sake of the metre. But perhaps we should rather read, with some of the MSS., 'And that other knight highte Palamon.' (See the note on ver. 393.)

'Highte' is a dissyllable, here as in other places, (vers. 618, 862, 1730, 3097, *et al.*) It is difficult to determine precisely what part of speech it is; but, upon the whole, I am inclined to consider it as a word of a very singular form, a verb active with a passive signification. See ver. 1560, where 'I highte' must signify 'I am called,' as in the verse preceding 'to highte' signifies 'to be called.' According to this hypothesis, in the present instance, and in vers. 618, 862, 1730, where 'highte' signifies 'was called,' it is put for 'highted'; and in ver. 3097, where it signifies 'is called,' for 'highteth.'

It should be observed, that the Sax. 'hatan,' *vocare, promittere*, from whence 'highte' is derived, is a verb active of the

common form; and so is ‘highte’ itself, when it signifies ‘to promise.’ (See vers. 6606, 8372.)

Ver. 1053. ‘At the sun uprist:’ I should have had no objection to the reading of Ed. Urr. ‘as the sonne uprist,’ i. e., ‘upriseth,’ if I had found it in any MS. The common reading is supported by Lydgate, ‘Th.,’ fol. 364, a, where ‘uprist’ is used for ‘uprising.’

Ver. 1080. ‘He blent:’ This word has various senses in Chaucer, as it is derived from ‘blinnan,’ *cessare*; ‘blindan,’ *cæcare*; or ‘blendan,’ *miscere*. It seems here to be used in a fourth sense, the same in which Shakspeare uses the verb ‘to blench,’ i. e., ‘to shrink or start aside.’ Johnson’s ‘Dict.,’ in v. Blench. And so, perhaps, in ver. 3751, and ‘Tro.,’ iii. 1352.

Ver. 1135. ‘To dien in the pain:’ So in Froissart, v. i. c. 206, Edward III. declares that he will not return ‘jusques à tant qu’il auroit fin de guerre, ou paix à sa suffisance, ou à son grand honneur: ou il mourroit en la peine.’ See also ‘R. R.’ 3326.

Ver. 1157. ‘Par amour I loved her:’ i. e., With love I loved her. This is a genuine old expression. See Froissart, v. i. c. 196:—‘Il aimé adonc par amours, et depuis espousa, Madame Ysabelle de Juillers;’ and Boccaccio, ‘Decam.,’ x. 7—‘Per amore amiate.’ So below, ver. 2114—‘That loveth par amour.’ From hence ‘paramour’ or ‘paramours,’ in one word, was used vulgarly to signify ‘love.’ (See vers. 3355, 4390, 13,772; and ‘a mistress,’ ver. 6036.)

Ver. 1165. ‘The olde clerk’s saw:’ The old clerk is Boethius, from whose book, ‘De Consolatione,’ Chaucer has borrowed largely in many places. The passage alluded to is in L. iii. Met. 12—

‘Quis legem det amantibus?
Major lex amor est sibi.’

Ver. 1214. ‘One stound:’ One moment. For this reading we are obliged to MS. C. i. Vulg. ‘or stound.’

Ver. 1264. ‘A drunken man:’ This is also from Boethius, L. iii. Pr. 2.

Ver. 1281. ‘The pure fetters:’ The very fetters. So in the ‘Duch.,’ ver. 583—‘The pure death.’ The Greeks used *καθαρός* in the same sense (*Τιμων καθαρός*—‘a very Timon:’

Aristoph. *Opu.* 1548;) and the Latins, ‘purus putus.’ See Froissart, v. ii. c. 104: ‘pur Anglois de courage.’

Ver. 1346. ‘Exiled on his head:’ So in Froissart, v. i. c. 241, orders were given ‘que nul sur sa teste ne s’advançast d’aller devant.’ In v. ii. c. 41, he uses, indifferently, ‘sur la teste,’ and ‘sur peine de la teste.’

Ver. 1378. ‘Beforne his head in his cell:’ This is the reading of MS. E. The MSS. C. i. and HA. read, ‘Beforn his owen celle,’ and perhaps their authority ought to have been followed in the text.

Ver. 1430. ‘Philostrate:’ In the ‘Theseida’ Arcite takes the name of Pentheo. (See the ‘Discourse,’ &c., p. cxii.) The name of Philostrate might be suggested to Chaucer, either by Boccaccio’s poem entitled ‘Philostrato,’ or by the ‘Decameron,’ in which one of the characters is so called. In the ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream,’ of which the principal subject is plainly taken from this tale, a Philostrate is also introduced, as a favourite servant of Theseus, and master of his sports.

Ver. 1479. ‘That needes cost:’ The sense of this passage, as it stands in the MSS., is so obscure, that I am inclined to adopt the alteration proposed in Gl. Urr. v. Nede. ‘That needes cast he must himselfen hide: *i. e.*, That he must needs ‘cast,’ or contrive, to hide himself. But I find the same expression in L. W. 2686—

‘Or nedes coste this thing mote have an ende.’

Ver. 1524. ‘Field hath eyen:’ An old monkish verse to this effect is quoted in MS. Bod. James, n. 6. p. 161:—‘Campus habet lumen, et habet nemus auris acumen.’

Ver. 1537. ‘Now shineth it, and now:’ I have printed this line so upon the credit of Edit. M., which professes to follow MSS.; though, perhaps, we might safely read, with MS. A., ‘Now itte shineth, now.’ ‘Itte’ may have been a dissyllable formerly, as well as ‘atte.’

Ver. 1568. ‘That shapen was,’ &c.: See T. iii. 734, 735, 7797.

Ver. 1628. ‘His thankes:’ With his good will. See also vers. 2109, 5854, and ver. 2116, ‘their thankes:’ with their good

will. So in the 'Saxon Chron.', p. 243—'sume here thankes, and sume here unthankes; aliqui libenter et aliqui ingratis.'

Ver. 1644. 'And breaking:' The MSS. all read, 'breketh.' But it is more likely, I think, that the first transcriber should have made a mistake in that word, than that Chaucer should have offended so unnecessarily against grammar.

Ver. 1658. 'In his fighting were as:' 'As' has been inserted for the sake of the metre, but I am not satisfied with it. Perhaps we should read 'fightinge,' and pronounce the final 'e.' In the Saxon, verbals of this form are said to terminate in 'ange,' 'inge,' 'onge,' 'unge.' (Hickes, Gr. A. S., c. 3. xvii.)

Vers. 1670, 1671. So in the 'Theseida', l. v. :—

'Ma come nui vegian venir in hora
Cossa che in mille anni non aviene.'

Ver. 1715. 'As though it were:' The best MSS. read, 'As it were in a listes;' which, perhaps, is right. See before, ver. 1014, 'on armes;' and Froissart, v. i. c. 153, 'en unes lices, qui pour celle cause furent faites.'

In the preceding line 'other' is the old expression for 'or.'

Ver. 1749. 'Mars the red:' So below, ver. 1971. Boccaccio has given Mars the same epithet in the opening of his 'Theseida'—

—'o rubicondo Marte.'

Ver. 1817. 'And therefore:' Imitated from the 'Theseida.' l. v. :—

'Ma pero che gia inamorato fui
E per amor sovente folegai,
M'e caro molto il perdonare altrui.'

Ver. 1861. 'Sle his contrary:' The terms in the 'Theseida' are simply—

'Chi l'altra parte caccera di fuore
Per forza d'arme, marito li fia'

Ver. 1900. 'Arsmetrike.' So arithmetic was commonly called in our ancient language. See below, ver. 7804; and 'The Seven Sages of Rome,' MS. Cotton, Galba, E. ix. :—

'Geometrie and arsmetrike,
Fisik and also retorike.'

Ver. 1915. 'Hath Theseus done wrought:' This should rather be 'done work.' The participle of the past time is put im-

properly for the infinitive mode. But the same inaccuracy occurs again in ver. 4591—

'These marchants have done fraught their shippes new.'

Ver. 1920. 'The temple of Venus:' In the description of this temple, Chaucer has taken very little from Boccaccio, as he had already inserted a very close imitation of this part of the 'Theseida' in his 'Assemblee of Foules,' from ver. 183 to ver. 287. If that poem alludes, as I suspect, to the intended marriage between John of Gaunt and Blanche of Lancaster, which took place in 1359, it will follow that the poem of 'Palamon and Arcite' must have been composed after that period.

Ver. 1932. 'And had a cuckow:' 'Had' is inserted upon the authority of Ed. M. I do not recollect to have found it in any MS.

Ver. 1942. 'The porter Idleness:' In the 'Ass. of F.,' ver. 261, 'Richesse' is the porter of Venus. But Idleness, 'Dame Oyseuse,' is the porter of the 'Jardin de Deduit.' ('Rom de la R.,' 645.)

Ver. 1977. I shall throw together a few lines of the 'Theseida,' which Chaucer has plainly copied in this description:—

'Ne v'era bestia ancora ne pastore—
Cerri—Nodosi, aspri, rigidi e vetusti—
E le porte eran de eterno adamante
Ferrato d'ogni parte tutte quante.'

Ver. 1999. 'The cruel ire:' From the 'Theseida':—

'Vide vi le ire rosse come focho.
E la paura palida in quel locho.'

'The pickpurse,' I am sorry to say, is Chaucer's own.

Ver. 2002. 'The shepen:' The stable; from the Saxon 'scypen,' which signifies the same thing. The translator of Bede renders 'ad stabula jumentorum,' 'to neata scypene.' (B. iv. c. 24.)

Ver. 2014. 'Outhees:' Outcry; from 'hutesium,' a term well known in our law. This line has usually been printed—

'Armed complaint on theft and fiers corage.'

Ver. 2019. 'The shippes hoppesteres:' It is needless to trouble the reader with the various readings and interpretations of this passage. 'To hoppe,' in Saxon, signified exactly the same as

'to dance,' though with us it has acquired a ludicrous sense; and the termination 'stre,' or 'ster,' was used to denote a female, like 'trix' in Latin. As, therefore, a female baker was called a 'bakester,' a female brewer a 'brewester,' a female webbe, or weaver, a 'webbester,' so, I conceive, a female hopper, or dancer, was called a 'hoppester.' It is well known that a ship, in most languages, is considered as a female.

Though the idea of a ship 'dancing on the waves' be not an unpoetical one, the adjunct 'hoppesteres' does not seem so proper in this place as the 'bellatrici' of the 'Theseida,' l. vii.:—

‘Vedevi ancor le navi bellatrici,
In voti carri e li volti guastati.’

In another respect Chaucer has improved upon his original, by representing the ships 'on fire.' It should be observed that the principal circumstances in Boccaccio's description of this temple of Mars are copied from Statius, l. vii.

Ver. 2020. 'The hunt: 'The huntsman, from the Saxon 'hunta.' See before, ver. 1680, and below, ver. 2630. I know not what to think of the two following lines. Was Chaucer serious, or did he mean, in this and some other similar passages, to ridicule the minute and often incongruous descriptions of the old romancers? The lines are in all the MSS.

Ver. 2027. 'Th' armourer and the bowyer:' The editions and all the MSS., except Dr Askew's, read, 'The barbour and the bocher.' I was glad to avail myself of the authority of those two MSS. to insert 'Th' armourer' instead of 'The barbour,' and in consequence of that emendation I have ventured, from conjecture only, to substitute 'the bowyer' for 'the bocher.'

Ver. 2031. 'With thilke sharpe sword:' 'Thilke' is from conjecture only. The MSS. read 'the.' 'Sharpe' is a dissyllable in other places. See vers. 2028, 2605, 9033.

In the next line I have also put 'Yhanging' instead of 'Hanging.'

Ver. 2128. 'Armed they weren:' This is upon the authority of Ed. M. The MSS. read, 'Armed were they.'

Ver. 2150. 'Alauns:' 'Alano' is the Spanish name of a species of dog, which the dictionaries call 'a mastiff.' Sir J. Bouchier's

translation of Froissart, B. iv. c. 24—‘Foure coursers and two allans of Spaygne, fayre and good.’

Ver. 2154. ‘Torettes:’ Rather, ‘toretes,’ with the MSS., from the Fr. ‘touret,’ which is explained by Cotgrave to signify, among other things, ‘the little ring by which a hawk’s lune, or leash, is fastened unto the jesses.’ Mr Warton has shewn, by several quotations, that ‘toretes’ were affixed to the collars of dogs, for a similar purpose. (*Hist. of Eng. Po.*, p. 364.) Our author says that ‘the ringe (of the astrolabe) renneth in a manner of a turet.’ (*Tr. of Ast.*, fol. 291, b.)

Ver. 2171. ‘Fraknes:’ The Saxon word for what we call ‘freckles.’

Ver. 2206. ‘What hawkes:’ He alludes to the following description in the ‘Theseida,’ l. vii.:—

‘L’aula grande d’alti cavalieri
Tutta era piena, e di diverse gente.
Quivi aveva zugulari e ministrieri
Di diversi atti copiosamente,
Zilfalchi, astori, falconi, e sparavieri,
Brachi, livreri, e mastin veramente,
Su per le stanze e in terra a giacere,
Assai a quor zentili belli a vedere.’

Ver. 2219. ‘And in her hour:’ I cannot better illustrate Chaucer’s astrology than by a quotation from the old ‘*Kalendrier de Bergiers*,’ Edit. 1500, sign. K. ii. b.:—‘Qui veult savoir comme bergiers scevent quel planete regne chascune heure du jour et de la nuit, doit savoir la planete du jour qui veult s’enquerir; et la premiere heure temporelle du soleil levant ce jour est pour celluy planete; la seconde heure est pour la planete ensuivant; et la tierce pour l’autre,’ &c., in the following order, viz., Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna. To apply this doctrine to the present case: the first hour of the Sunday, reckoning from sunrise, belonged to the Sun, the planet of the day; the second to Venus, the third to Mercury, &c.; and continuing this method of allotment, we shall find that the twenty-second hour also belonged to the Sun, and the twenty-third to Venus; so that the hour of Venus really was, as Chaucer says, two hours before sunrise of the following day.

Accordingly, we are told, in ver. 2273, that the third hour after

Palamon set out for the temple of Venus, the sun rose, and Emily began to go to the temple of Diana. It is not said that this was the hour of Diana, or the moon, but it really was; for, as we have just seen, the twenty-third hour of Sunday belonging to Venus, the twenty-fourth must be given to Mercury, and the first hour of Monday falls in course to the Moon, the presiding planet of that day.

After this Arcite is described as walking to the temple of Mars (ver. 2369), in 'the next hour of Mars,' that is, the fourth hour of the day. It is necessary to take these words together, for 'the next hour,' singly, would signify the second hour of the day; but that, according to the rule of rotation mentioned above, belonged to Saturn, as the third did to Jupiter. The fourth was 'the next hour of Mars' that occurred after the hour last named.

Ver. 2223. 'Fairest of fair:' So Palamon in the 'Theseida':—

‘O bella dea, del bon Vulcan sposa,
Per cui se aliegra il monte Citherone,
Dee i ti priego, che mi sii pietosa,
Per quello amore che portasti ad Adone.’

And again. See below, ver. 2240:—

‘Io non te cheglio in arme aver victoria—
Io cercho sola Emilia, la qual poi
Donarmi, Dea, se donar la mi voi.
Il modo trova tu, ch’io non ne curo
O ch’io sia vinto, o ch’io sia vincitore.’

Ver. 2273. 'The third hcur inequal:' In the astrological system, the day, from sunrise to sunset, and the night, from sunset to sunrise, being each divided into twelve hours, it is plain that the hours of the day and night were never equal, except just at the equinoxes. The hours attributed to the planets were of this unequal sort. (See 'Kalendrier de Berg.', loc. cit., and our author's 'Treatise on the Astrolabe'.)

Ver. 2283. 'Fu mondo il tempio e di bei drapi ornato.' ('Thes.,' l. vii.)

Ver. 2291. 'Her bright hair:' So Emilia is described in 'Thes.,' l. xii.:—

‘Dicho che i suo crin parevan d’oro,
Non con trezza restretti, ma soluti
E petinati.’

Ver. 2292. 'A coroune:' 'Corona di querzia cereale.'
(*'Thes.'*, l. vii.)

Ver. 2358. 'Shall thee declaren:' This is improper, as the fires have already declared the event of the combat. In the original, as I remember, the appearance of Diana is prior to the omen.

Ver. 2372. 'Payen:' This French word is constantly used in the best MSS. instead of 'pagan.'

Ver. 2375. 'O strunge god:' The prayer of Arcite, in the 'Theseida,' begins in the same manner:—

'A forte dio, che ne i regni nivosi
Bistonii servi le tue sacre case—
Se per alto volere la mai etate
E le mie forze meritan, che io
De i toi sia detto, per quella pietate,
Ch'ebbe Neptuno, alor che con disio
Di Citharea usavi la beltate,
Rinchiuso da Vulcan, ad ogni idio
Facto palese, humilmente te priego,
Che a li miei prieghi tu non fazi niego.
Io son come tu vidi giovinetto,' &c.

Ver. 2404. 'Then help me:' So in the 'Theseida':—

Dunque me ajuta per lo santo focho,
Che te arse già, si come me arde hora.

I tempii tuoi eterni soneranno
De l'armi del mio vinto compagnone,
Et ancora le mie vi penderano—
Eterni fochi sempre vi arderano,
E la barboa [f. barba] e i mei con [f. crin] che offensione
Di ferro non sentiron te imprometto.'

Ver. 2451. 'Out-rede:' Out-wit; surpass in counsel. The sense of this word has been most ridiculously mistaken by Dryden:—

'For this advantage age from youth has won,
As not to be outridden, though outrun.'

Ver. 2469. 'Mine be also the maladies cold:' I apprehend that 'maladies,' in this verse, is to be pronounced as of four syllables—

'Mine be also the maladiës cold'

See below, ver. 2495—

‘There was in th’ hostelriës all about.’

And ver. 2591—

‘Ther n’ere such companiës never tway.’

However, if any one should prefer a hobbling line with another syllable in it, he may read, with the best MSS., ‘And mine be also,’ &c.

Ver. 2506. ‘Gniding of shields :’ ‘Rubbing,’ from the Saxon *gnidan*, *fricare*. I have not scrupled to insert this reading in the text from a single MS. (N.C.), and that one of the least authority. Indeed both Caxton’s editions support it, for they read ‘guydyng ;’ and ‘n’ in many MSS. is undistinguishable from ‘u.’ The other readings are, ‘gynggynge,’ ‘gigging,’ ‘grigging,’ ‘girding,’ ‘gyding,’ ‘gryding.’

Ver. 2513. ‘Pipes, trumps.’ ‘Theseida,’ l. ii. :—

‘A una hora trombe, nachare, e tamburi
Sonaron forte.’

See Du Cange, in v. Nacara, who describes it to be a kind of brazen drum used in the cavalry.

Ver. 2516. ‘Here three :’ So in the ‘Theseida :’—

‘Qui tre, la quattro, e qui sei adunati,
Tra lor mostrando diverse ragione.’

Ver. 2527. ‘Held yet the chamber :’ So the ‘Theseida :’—

‘Anchor le riche camere tenea
Del suo palagio.’

Ver. 2535. ‘An O :’ It may be doubted whether this be an abbreviation of ‘oyez !’ or whether the interjection ‘ho !’ were used to command a cessation of noise, as well as of fighting, &c. For the latter use, see vers. 1708, 2658, and Holinshed, p. 495 :— ‘The Duke of Norfolk was not fullie set forward, when the king cast down his warden, and the heraldes cried, Ho ! ho !’

Ver. 2552. ‘Himself to were :’ To defend. It is a Saxon word. See ‘Chr. Sax.’ Gibs., p. 57—‘hine werede,’—*se defendit*; and p. 148. See also Lydg. ‘Troy,’ B. iv. :—

‘That shelde ne plate might his body were.’

Ver. 2559. ‘Ylast :’ The prepositive ‘y’ is an addition of my own, for the sake of the metre; but, perhaps, we might read, ‘No

longer shall the tourneyingü last.' See the note on ver. 1658. I should observe that some MSS. read 'tournament,' and MS. D. 'tourmentenge,' which may lead us to suspect that Chaucer possibly wrote, 'tourneymenting.'

Ver. 2563. 'The voice of the people:' So the 'Theseida':—

'Di nobili e del populo il romore
Tocho le stelle, si fu alto e forte,
Li dei, dicendo, servi tal signore
Che de gli amici suoi fugie la morte.'

Ver. 2608. 'The hearte spone:' This part of the human body is not mentioned in any dictionary that I have seen. The following passage of Jonson ('Sad Shepherd,' A. i. S. vi.) would incline one to suspect that it means the concave part of the breast, where the lower ribs unite with the cartilago ensiformis :—

'He that undoes him, (the deer,)
Doth cleave the brisket bone, upon the spoon
Of which a little gristle grows.'

The Gloss. supposes 'spone' to be a participle, signifying 'thrust,' 'driven,' 'pushed;' from the Italian 'spingere.'

Ver. 2617. 'He foineth on his foe:' I have ventured to substitute 'foo' instead of 'foot,' or 'feet,' the readings of the MSS. 'Foot' seems to have been originally introduced by a copyist from the preceding line, and to have been afterwards altered to 'feet,' in order to make some sense.

Ver. 2628. 'The vale of Galaphey:' This word is variously written 'Colaphey,' 'Galgaphey,' 'Galapey.' There was a town called Galapha, in Mauritania, Tingitana, upon the river Malva, (Cellar. 'Geog. Ant.', v. ii. p. 935,) which perhaps may have given name to the vale here meant. For 'Belmarie,' ver. 2632, see the note on ver. 57.

Ver. 2673. 'The trompoures:' The trumpeters. So the best MSS. If the learned Editor of 'Ancient Scottish Poems' had found this word in this sense in his copy of Chaucer, he would not, I apprehend, have looked any further for an explanation of it in 'The Dance,' by Dunbar, St. 2, v. 10, p. 27.

Ver. 2677. 'Which a miracle:' It is scarce necessary to observe that 'which,' in our ancient language, was often used for

'who' and 'what.' It is used for 'what' here, and again, vers. 5621, 6875.

Ver. 2685. 'And was all his in chere, as his in heart:' I have patched up this verse, as well as I could, out of the different copies. There is no authority, as I recollect, for the first 'in,' except Ca. 2, but it seems absolutely necessary; and all the copies read, 'as in his herte,' which, I think, is evidently wrong.

Ver. 2686. 'A fury:' Most of the copies have 'a fire.' MS. A. reads 'a fuyr,' from which I have made the present reading, as in the 'Theseida' it is 'Herinis,' i. e., Erinnys, one of the Furies.

Ver. 2698. 'Carven:' Cut out of his harness. I suppose, to save the time and trouble of regularly disarming him, the laces, &c., were cut.

Ver. 2715. 'And fermacies:' Pharmacies. I have added the 'and,' which seems as necessary to the sense as to the metre.

Ver. 2735. 'The gree:' The prize; the honour of the day. So in 'P. P.,' fol. 98:—

'The gre yet hath he gotten, for all his grete wound.'

And in that curious old ballad, 'The Turnament of Tottenham,' ver. 91, 'Ancient Poetry,' v. ii.:—

'[To] which of all the bachelery granted is the gree.'

And again, ver. 186:—

'They gathered Perkin about on every side,
And grant him there the gree—the more was his pride.'

It was necessary to vindicate this old phrase, as the editions have discarded it for 'They grete.'

Ver. 2740. 'A journee:' A day's work, or way, Fr. To make this still clearer, the editions, in general, read 'a day's journey,' and spoil the verse.

Ver. 2748. 'Bouke:' The trunk of the body, probably; from the Saxon 'buce,' *venter*.

Ver. 2802. 'Overnome:' Overtaken; from 'overnimman,' Saxon.

Ver. 2803. 'And yet:' So in the 'Theseida,' l. x.:—

'E anchor ne le brazza era perduta
Da vital forza, sol ne lo intelletto
E nel core era ancora sostenuta
La pocha vita.'

Ver. 2813. 'Therefore I stint:' This is apparently a fling at Boccaccio's pompous description of the passage of Arcite's soul to heaven. ('Thes.', l. xi.) It should be observed, however, that our author had already made use of the same description in his 'Troilus,' v. 1806, seq. It is not in the 'Philostrato.'

Ver. 2817. 'There Mars his soul gie:' The force of 'there' in this passage will best appear by a collation of other similar passages. See particularly vers. 5022, 7143, 9182.

Ver. 2856. 'He casteth:' I have added 'he,' to complete the verse. The use of pronouns redundantly is common in Chaucer.

Ver. 2862. 'In that selve grove:' In the 'Theseida,' Arcita is buried—'nel bosco, ove rancuna'—

‘Aver sovente soleva de amore.’

Ver. 2866. 'Of funeral:' 'Of' is a conjectural supplement. Or the verse may be, perhaps better, completed by taking in the word 'fully,' from MS. NC. and Ed. Ca., 2,—in which th' office—

‘Funeral he might all fully accomplice,’

Ver. 2872. 'And after this:' The second 'this' is from conjecture only. Some MSS. read, 'And after this Theseus hath ysent'—which perhaps is right.

Ver. 2879. 'Bare the visage:' If this expression were in Milton, the critics would not fail to call it 'an elegant Græcism.' In Chaucer we can only hope that it may be allowed to be 'an elegant Anglicism.' Froissart says that the corpse of our Edward III was carried 'tout au long de la cité de Londres, à viaire découvert, jusques à Westmonstier.' (V. i. c. 326.)

Ver. 2885. 'With flotery beard:' 'Thes.' l. xi.:—

‘Con rabuffata braza [or, barba] e tristo crine
E polveroso.’

'Flotery' seems literally to mean 'floting;' as hair dishevelled ('rabbuffata') may be said to float upon the air. 'Ruggy' is 'rough.'

Ver. 2887. 'And passing over:' According to this reading, the sense is plain, that Palamon was the ruefullest, &c., 'passing over,' or 'excepting,' Emily. But all the MSS. that I have

seen, read ‘other.’ If we adhere to that, we must dispose the parenthesis thus :—

‘ And (passing other of weping) Emelie
The ruefullest,’ &c.;

and the sense will be, that with Palamon came also Emily (‘passing others of, or in, weeping’) the ‘ruefullest,’ &c. But such a construction would be very harsh, and unlike Chaucer’s usual facility; and therefore I rather believe we should read ‘over,’ with Ed. Urr.

Ver. 2897. ‘His bow Turkeis:’ So in the ‘Rom de la R.’ Love is said to have ‘deux arcs Turquois,’ ver. 924.

Ver. 2904. ‘The master street:’ The principal street. ‘Le souverain carrefour.’ (Froissart, v. iv. c. 28.)

Ver. 2960. ‘The liche-wake:’ The custom of watching with dead bodies (lice, Sax.) is probably very ancient in this country. It was abused, as other wakes and vigils were. See Du Cange, in v. Vigiliæ :—‘In vigiliis circa corpora mortuorum vetantur choreæ et cantileneæ, seculares ludi et alii turpes et fatui.’ (Synod. Wigorn, an. 1240, c. 5.) Chaucer seems to have confounded the wake-plays, as they were called, of his own time, with the funeral-games of the ancients. So in ‘Troilus,’ v. 303, Troilus says to Pandarus :—

‘But of the fire and flambe funeral
In which my body brennen shall to glede,
And of the feste and playea palestral
At my vigile I pray thee take good hede.’

Ver. 2964. ‘In no disjoint:’ With no disadvantage. So ver. 13,341 ‘in such disjoint:’ at such disadvantage.

Ver. 2993. ‘That fair chain of love:’ Our author’s philosophy is borrowed, as it is usually, from Boethius. L. ii. Met. 8 :—

‘Hanc rerum seriem ligat,
Terras ac pelagus regens,
Et calo imperitans, amor.’

See also, for what follows, L. iv. Pr. 6.

Ver. 3019. ‘Lo the oak:’ So in the ‘Theseida:’—

‘Li querci, che anno si lungo nutrimento
E tanta vita quanto noi vedemo,
Anno pur alcun tempo finimento.
Le dure pietre ancor,’ &c.

Ver. 3043. 'Then is it wisdom:' From the 'Theseida':—

'E pero fare de la necessitate
Virtu, quando bisogna, e sapientia,
E il contrario e chiara vanitate.'

Ver. 3056. 'His vassallage:' Valour, prowess. Froissart, v. i. c. 271, 'a grand honneur et vassellage.' See Du Cange, in v. *Vassaticum*.

Ver. 3078. 'With all th' advice:' So the statute 5 H. IV. is said in the preamble to be made 'de l'advis et assent des seignurs,' &c. The same form is used in most of the acts of that reign.

Ver. 3091. 'Oweth:' By writing this word so, according to some MSS., we preserve a proper distinction between 'oweth,' the third person sing. of the present tense, and 'ought,' which was formerly only used in the past tense.

Ver. 3109. 'Thus endeth Palamon:' Before I quit this tale, I will just take notice that the same subject has been treated twice in French verse, many years since Chaucer's time, by two ladies. The one, Anne de Graville, is said by Du Verdier ('Bibl.', p. 42,) to have translated 'de' viell langage et prose le beau romant des deux amants Palamon et Arcita.' It began thus:—

'Victorieux en armes et amours
Fut Theseus, apres que plusieurs jours
Eut sejourné en l'Amazone terre,
Ou Cupido et Mars luy firent guerre,
Les quels vainquit et Hypolite ausi.'

The other, Jeanne de la Fontaine, is mentioned by La Croix du Maine; and it was most probably her poem that Johannes Secundus has celebrated, (l. iii. Eleg. xv.,) as he appears to have written her epitaph and a nenia upon her death. (V. 'Lib. Funer.', inter Opp. Secund.)

In the new edit. of 'Les Bibliotheques Françoises,' the poem of Anne de Graville is said to be still preserved in the Royal Library at Paris; and I find, from a note of M. de la Monnoye in that edit., that he was well apprised of our Chaucer's having borrowed this tale from the 'Theseida.'

Ver. 3126. 'In Pilate's voice:' In such a voice as Pilate was used to speak with in the Mysteries. Pilate, being an odious

character, was probably represented as speaking with a harsh, disagreeable voice.

Ver. 3156. After this verse, the two following are found in so many MSS. that perhaps they ought to have been inserted in the text:—

‘And ever a thousand good ageins on badde;
That knowest thou wel, but if thou be madde.’

Ver. 3172. ‘As deem not:’ This phrase has occurred before—ver. 2304, ‘as keep me;’ ver. 2319, ‘as send.’ I once thought that ‘as’ in these cases was used elliptically for ‘do so much as;’ but then the following verb must have been in the infinitive mood, whereas it is often in the imperative. See ver. 5773, ‘as taketh;’ ver. 6631, ‘as doth;’ ver. 13,352, ‘as beth.’ I am, therefore, rather inclined to understand it in the sense of ‘so,’ according to its original etymology. ‘As’ is an abbreviation of ‘als,’ and that of ‘al swa’—*sic omnino*. (See vers. 5481, 5778, 7007.)

Ver. 3199. ‘Hendy Nicholas:’ Hendy, or Hende, as it was more commonly written, signified ‘courteous.’ So ver. 6868:—

‘Ah, sir, ye should be hende,
And courteous, as a man of your estate.’

Ver. 3210. ‘Augrim-stones:’ ‘Augrim’ is a corruption of ‘algorithm,’ the Arabian term for numeration. ‘Augrim-stones,’ therefore, were the pebbles, or counters, which were anciently used in numeration.

Ver. 3217. ‘The king’s note:’ What this ‘note,’ or ‘tune,’ was, I must leave to be explained by the musical antiquaries. ‘Angelus ad Virginem,’ I suppose, was ‘Ave Maria,’ &c.

Ver. 3223. ‘Of eighteen year:’ The words ‘I guess’ are not in the MSS. MS. A. reads ‘seventene,’ which, perhaps, may be right, if ‘seventene’ be pronounced as of four syllables. Ask. 1 and 2 would remove all difficulties by reading,—‘Of eightene year this woman was of age.’

Ver. 3227. ‘He knew not Caton:’ The calling of this author ‘Caton’ shews that he was more studied in French than in Latin. See below, vers. 9251, 14,946, 16,155. Who he was, or of what age, is uncertain; but his authority, four or five hundred years ago, seems to have been as great as if he had

really been the famous Censor of Rome. However, the maxim here alluded to is not properly one of Cato's; but I find it in a kind of supplement to the moral distichs, entitled 'Facetus int. Auctores Octo Morales.' Lugd. 1538, cap. iii. :—

‘Duc tibi prole parem sponsam moresque venustam,
Si cum pace velis deducere justam.’

The same treatise, or at least one with the same beginning and on the same subject, is mentioned in the Cat. MSS. Col. Trin., Dublin, note 275, under the title of 'Urbanus.' It is there attributed to Daniel Ecclesiensis (Churche), who lived about the year 1180. (See Bale, Cent. iii. 17; and Fabric., 'Bib. Med. Et.', in v.)

Ver. 3237. ‘Many a *gore*:’ This word is used again in ver. 13,719. I do not understand it in either place.

Ver. 3247. ‘Blissful for to see:’ The better MSS. read ‘on to see.’ (See L. W. 2914, Lydg. ‘Troy,’ B. iii. ch. xxii. :)—

‘His brother Troylus, so goodly on to see;’
and Gower, (‘Conf. Am.’, fol. 17, b. :)—

‘Tho was she fouler unto [r. on to] se.’

Ver. 3248. ‘The new perjenete tree:’ Some of the MSS. read ‘perjonette,’ as if the word were derived from the Italian ‘pero giovanetto,’ rather than from the French ‘poire,’ or ‘pere, jeunette.’ In either case it signifies ‘a young pear.’

Ver. 3251. ‘Pearled with latoun:’ That is, I believe, ornamented with latoun in the shape of pearls. It is probable that some very elegant purses were embroidered with real pearls.

Ver. 3254. ‘So gay a popelot:’ This word may either be considered as a diminutive from ‘poupée,’ a puppet; or as a corruption of ‘papillot,’ a young butterfly.

Ver. 3268. ‘A primerole:’ Old French for a primrose. It is used by Gower (‘Conf. Am.’, fol. 148).

Ibid. ‘A piggesnie:’ The Romans used ‘oculus’ as a term of endearment, and perhaps ‘piggesnie,’ in vulgar language, only means ‘ocellus;’ the eyes of that animal being remarkably small. The word occurs again in the ‘Remedie of Love,’ ver. 257, though I do not believe that to be a work of Chaucer.

Ver. 3286. ‘Harow:’ It would much exceed the limits of these

notes to recite the several opinions concerning the original of this word. The curious reader may consult Du Cange in v., and Hickes, 'Gr. Fr. Theot.', p. 96. I rather believe it to have been derived from 'har,' *altus*, and 'op,' *clamor*, two Icelandic words, which were probably once common to all the Scandinavian nations. (See 'Gudmund. And. Lex. Iceland.', by Resenius, Hafn., 1683.) In support of this opinion, it may be observed, that the very word 'haroep,' or 'harop,' was used by some of the inhabitants of the Low Countries in the same sense in which 'harou' was by the Normans. (Du Cange, in v. Haroep.)

Ver. 3308. 'Of Christ's:' 'Of' is added from conjecture only.

Ver. 3318. 'With Paul's windows:' Perhaps this means that his shoes were cut in squares, like panes of glass. Bale mentions 'fenestratos calceos' as making part of the habit of the Franciscans. (Cent. ii. 27 and 91.) They also occur in the Cistercian statutes, an. 1529, and the monks are forbidden to wear them. (Du Cange, in v. Calcei fenestrati.)

Ver. 3321. 'Of a light waget,' or, 'watchet:' Skinner explains 'watchet' to mean 'a colour,' a whitish blue; but in this place it seems rather to mean some kind of cloth; denominated, perhaps, from the town of Watchet, in Somersetshire. Instead of 'light,' some MSS. read 'fin;' and MS. A. 'whit.' This last epithet would be quite inconsistent with Skinner's explanation.

Ver. 3329. 'The school of Oxenforde:' The school of Oxford seems to have been in much the same estimation for its dancing, as that of Stratford for its French. (See before, ver. 125.) Oxenforde is a quadrisyllable. 'Oxnaforda,' Sax.

Ver. 3336. 'Tapstere:' A female keeper of a tap, or tavern. (See note on ver. 2019, and the Prol. to the Continuation of the C. T., ed. Urr, p. 594.)

Ver. 3337. 'Squaimous:' Squeamish; but I know not how to make that sense agree with what follows. Robert of Brunne, (in his translation of 'Manuel des Pechées,' MS. Bod., 2078, fol. 46,) writes this word 'esquamious,' which is nearer to its original, 'exquamiare,' a corruption of 'excambiare.'

Ver. 3358. 'A shot window:' That is, I suppose, a window that was 'shut.' It might, perhaps, be better to write this word, with some of the MSS., 'shet,' or 'shette,' as Chaucer does in

other places (ver. 16,605, 16,610). MS. A. reads 'shop,' and HA. 'short.'

Ver. 3361, 3362. These two lines, containing Absolon's song, were meant, I apprehend, to be broken into four short verses, which will rhyme together very harmoniously, if the accent be laid upon the last of 'lady,' as it often is in such compositions.

Ver. 3382. 'And some for strokes:' In the margin of MS. C. 1, is the following note: 'Ovid. Ictibus agrestis,' &c.

Ver. 3384. 'He playeth Herod:' This is much in character. The parish-clerks had always a principal share in the representation of Mysteries. (See the Pref. to 'Dodsley's Old Plays,' p. xii.)

Ver. 3392. 'The nighe sly:' Gower has this proverb ('Conf. Am.', B. iii. f. 58:)—

'An olde sawe is: who that is slygh
In place wher he may be nyghe,
He maketh the ferre leef loth.'

Ver. 3449. 'Saint Frideswide:' 'Seint' is one of the very few French adjectives which, after their naturalisation here, retained for a considerable time, I apprehend, a distinction of gender. (See the 'Essay,' &c., p. lxi.)

Chaucer always writes it 'Seinte,' when he uses it in the feminine gender; and the final 'e' is often to be pronounced, as in this place. (See vers. 7186, 10,292, 'Seinte Marie; ' vers. 7406, 7701, 'Seinte Charitee.') Of the same form are 'excellente,' ver. 10,459, and 'peregrine,' ver. 10,742.

There is great propriety in making the carpenter invoke St Frideswide, who was patroness of a considerable priory at Oxford, and in high estimation there.

Ver. 3457. 'Another clerk:' He alludes to a story, which is told of the famous Thales, by Plato in his 'Theætetus,' p. 127, Ed. Fic.; but our author probably read it in the 'Cento Novelle Antiche,' N. 36. It is there entitled, 'D'uno Strologo ch' ebbe, nome Milensius, che fu ripreso da una donna.'

Ver. 3479. 'Wights:' 'Witches.' In the Teutonic, 'wite-vrouwe;' but whether they were so called from their wisdom, or from their being supposed to be clothed in white, is not clear. A widow, in that language, is called a 'wit-vrouwe,' from the

latter circumstance. (Kilian in v.) See Keysler's dissertation 'De Mulieribus Fatidicis,' in which, with a great deal of learning and probability, he has traced the popular notions of witches and witchcraft, in the northern parts of Europe, from a very early period. The faculty of floating upon the water, so as not to be capable of being drowned, is ascribed by Pliny to a race of male witches in Pontus. 'Nat. Hist.,' l. vii. c. 2—'Non posse mergi, ne quidem vestibus degravatos.'

Ver. 3480. 'The night-spel:' The charm which follows, vers. 3483-3486, is so lamely represented in all the MSS., that I have left it as I found it in the common editions. It might, perhaps, be a little improved by reading it thus:—

'Jesu Christ and Saint Benedight,
Bliss this house from every wight,
From the nightes mare. Paternoster.
Where wonest thou Saint Peter's suster?'

In ver. 2, 'wicked' may be left out upon the authority of MS. A. and others. It is certainly an unnecessary epithet.

Ver. 3. 'Paternoster' was often repeated in the middle, as well as at the end, of charms.

Ver. 4. Instead of 'wonest,' some copies read 'wendest.' I do not understand how the nightmare came to be allied to St Peter.

To say the truth, I suspect this charm to be an interpolation. We have a night-spell of another form in 'Gervas. Tilber. Otia Imper.,' l. iii. c. 93. See also the 'Decameron,' D. vii. N. 1:—

'Fantasima, fantasima,
Che di notte vai,
A coda ritta ci venisti,
A coda ritta te n'andrai,' &c.

Concerning the nightmare, see Keysler, 'Antiq. Septent.' p. 497.

Ver. 3509. 'No labbe:' No blab. 'Labben,' Holl., *klappen*, Belg., 'blaterare,' Kilian.

Ver. 3512. 'Harrowed hell:' Harried. Saxon 'harrassed,' 'subdued.' Our ancestors were very fond of a story of Christ's exploits in His 'descensus ad inferos,' which they called the 'harrowing of hell.' They took it, with several others of the

same stamp, from the Gospel of Nicodemus. (Fabr. 'Cod. Apoc. N. T.') There is a poem upon this subject in MS. Bod. 1687 :—

‘Hou Jesu Christ herowed helle
Of harde gestes ich wille telle.’

And in the 'Chester Whitsun-Playes,' (MS. Harl. 2013,) the company of cookes, which was to exhibit the seventeenth pageant, or the 'Descensus ad Inferna,' is thus addressed :—

‘You cookes with your carriage see that you doe well,
In pagente sett out the harrowinge of helle.’

See also 'P. P.,' pass. xix. f. 101–103.

Ver. 3526. 'For God : ' 'Pour Dieu,' French.

Ver. 3539. 'The sorrow of Noe : ' It will be in vain, I apprehend, to look for this anecdote in Genesis, even in Dr Kennicot's edition. Nicholas probably quoted it from the Mysteries, with which the carpenter was better acquainted. The dispute between Noah and his wife upon this occasion, makes a considerable part of the third pageant of the 'Chester Whitsun-Playes' above mentioned. (MS. Harl., 2013.) The following lines will shew the grounds of her refusal to embark :—

‘**Noe.** Wife, come in, why standes thou there ?
Thou art ever froward, that dare I swere.
Come in, on Godes halfe ; tyme it were,
For fear lest that wee drowne.’

‘**Wife.** Yea, Sir, set up your sail,
And rowe forth with evil haile,
For withouten anie faile
I wil not oute of this toune ;
But I have my gossepes everich one,
One foote further I will not gone :
They shal not drown, by St. John,
And I may save ther life.
They loved me full well, by Christ.
But thou will let them into thie chist,
Ellis rowe forth, Noe, when thou list,
And get thee a newe wife.’

At last Shem, with the assistance of his brethren, fetches her on board by force, and upon Noah's welcoming her she gives him a box on the ear.

These plays are said, perhaps truly, to have been first written in 1328; but the Harleian MS. represents them as they were to

be exhibited in 1600. There is a better copy of the same plays in the Bodl. Lib., E. N. 115, transcribed by one William Bedford, 1604; but even in that we see but small remains of the original diction and orthography.

Ver. 3624. 'His owen hand:' 'With' his own hand. So Gower ('Conf. Am.', fol. 76. b:)—

'The craftes Mynerva of wolle fonde,
And made cloth her owen honde.'

See also fol. 113. a:—

'Thyng which he sayd his owne mouth.'

Ver. 3625. 'The stalks:' The steps (Gloss., Urr.;) but I rather believe the 'renge' to mean the 'steps,' and the 'stalks' the upright pieces of a ladder.

Ver. 3638. 'Clum:' From the Saxon 'clumian,' *mussilare, murmurare*.

Ver. 3692. 'A true love:' What kind of thing this was to be borne 'under the tongue,' I do not understand.

Ver. 3703. 'I swelt and sweat:' Sweltan, Saxon, signifies 'to die.' Chaucer uses 'swelte' to signify the effect of a great oppression of spirits. (See vers. 1358, 9650; 'R. R.', 2480.) Hence our word 'sultry' ('sweltry,') to express a suffocating heat.

Ver. 3709. 'It will not be, compame:' So MS. C. 1. It is put, for the sake of the rhyme, instead of the French *compaine*, 'compagnon.' We use friend in the same sense. In MS. C. it is written 'compaine'; in some of the best MSS., 'com bame.' The editions read:—

'As helpe me God and sweet Saint Jame.'

Ver. 3724. 'Thine ore:' The Editt. have made it 'thy nore.' But 'ore' is the right word. It signifies 'grace,' 'favour,' 'protection.' See 'R. G.', p. 381—'mylce and ore,' mercy and grace; p. 475—'in was ore ich am ido,' in whose protection I am put. And 'Li Beaus Disconus,' (MS. Cotton., Cal. A. ii. fol. 49, b:)—

'Syr Ly Beaus thurstede sore,
And seyde : Maugys, thyn ore,
To drinke lette me go.'

Where 'thine ore' must be understood to mean 'with thy favour,' as in this passage of Chaucer.

Ver. 3768. 'The viretote:' This is the reading of the best MSS. The explanation of the word I leave to the reader's sagacity.

Ver. 3772. 'More tow on his distaff:' So in Froissart, v. iv. p. 92, ed. 1574—'Il aura en bref temps autres estoupes en sa quenoille.'

Ver. 3809. 'An handbreadth all about:' 'All' has been added for the sake of the metre, but, I believe, unnecessarily. The original phrase was 'an handes brede,' an hand's breadth; so that 'handebrede,' as it is written in some MSS., would naturally continue to be pronounced as a trisyllable.

Ver. 3819. 'He fand neither to selle:' This is a French phrase. 'Fabliaux,' t. ii. p. 282—

‘Ainc tant come il mist à descendre
Ne trouva point de pain à vendre.’

In the next verse, 'selle,' for the sake of the rhyme, is put for 'sille;' Saxon 'syl;' French, 'sueil;' Latin, 'solum.'

Ver. 3853. 'When folk have laughed:' The better MSS. read 'laughen,' which, therefore, is probably right. Chaucer sometimes forms the participle of the past time in 'en,' even in those verbs of which he also uses the participle in 'ed.' (See ver. 3311, 'washen'; 7354, 'farein'; for 'washed,' and 'fared.')

Ver. 3862. 'So the I:' So may I 'the,' or 'thrive.' This ancient phrase is terribly corrupted in most of the MSS. and Edit. It occurs again below, vers. 12,881, 16,397.

Ver. 3863. 'With blearing:' With a trick put upon a proud miller. So ver. 17,201: 'bleared is thine eye'—thou art cheated. And 'R. R.,' ver. 3912: 'almost bleared is mine eye'—I am almost cheated.

Ver. 3877. 'As hath a leek:' Boccaccio has the same allusion, 'Decam.,' Introd. to D. iv.:—'Et quegli, che contra alla mia eta parlando vanno, mostran male che conoscano, che per che il porro habbi il capo bianco, che la coda sia verde.'

Ver. 3880. 'Yet in our ashen:' There is so great a resemblance between this line and the following of the 'Churchyard Elegy,' Dodsley's Coll., vol. 4—

‘Ev'n in our ashes live their wonted fires’—

that I should certainly have considered the latter as an imitation,

if Mr Gray himself had not referred us to the 169th (170th) Sonnet of Petrarch, as his original, ‘Ch’ i’ veggio nel pensier,’ &c.

Ver. 3893. ‘The chimbe :’ ‘Kime,’ Teut., means the prominence of the staves beyond the head of the barrel. The imagery is very exact and beautiful.

Ver. 3902. ‘Of a souter, a shipman, or a leach :’ The proverbial expression, ‘Ex suture medicus,’ was perhaps derived from the fable of Phædrus with that title. (L. i. Fab. 14.) The other, ‘Ex suture nauclerus,’ is alluded to by Pynson the printer, at the end of his edit. of ‘Littleton’s Tenures,’ 1525. Ames, p. 488. Speaking of one Redman, another printer, he says:—‘Miror profecto unde nunc tandem se fateatur typographum, nisi forte quum Diabolus sutorem nauclerum, et illum calcographum fecit.’

Ver. 3904. ‘It is half way prime :’ In the ‘Discourse,’ &c., §. XIV., I have supposed that this means ‘half way past prime,’ about half hour after seven A.M., the half way between prime and terce. In the fictitious ‘Modus Tenendi Parliamentum,’ a book not much older than Chaucer, ‘Hora mediae primæ’ seems to be used in the same sense; ‘c. de diebus et horis Parliamenti.’ MS. Cotton, Nero. D. vi. On common days, ‘Parliamentum debet inchoari horâ mediae primæ—in diebus festivis horâ primâ propter divinum servitium.’ In a contemporary French translation of this treatise (MS. Harl. 305), ‘hora mediae primæ’ is rendered ‘a la my heure le prime ;’ in an old English version (MS. Harl., 930), ‘the oure of myd pryme ;’ and in another (MS. Harl., 1309), ‘midde prime time.’ Our author uses ‘prime large’ (ver. 10,674) to signify that prime was considerably past.

Ver. 3909. ‘Set his howve :’ His hood. So in ‘Tr.,’ B. iii. 775, ‘an howve above a cap,’ signifies ‘a hood over a cap.’ And in ‘P. P.,’ fol. 4, sergants-at-law are described ‘in howves of silk ;’ but in fol. 16, it is said—

‘Shal no sergeant for his service were no silk hode.’

Both words seem to be derived from the Teut. ‘hoofd,’ a head.

Hood and cap being equally coverings for the head, ‘to set a man’s hood’ is the same as to set his cap. (See note on ver. 587.)

Ver. 3927. ‘A long pavade :’ It appears, from ver. 3958, that

'the pavade' was a weapon of offence. Of what sort I cannot tell, as I do not remember to have met with the word any where else. 'Pavois,' Fr., in those times signified a 'long shield.'

Ver. 3929. 'A joly popper:' A bodkin, according to Sp. and Sk.; who, however, produce no authority for such an interpretation. The name seems to be fitter for a pistol; though I am not prepared to prove that pistols were carried in the pocket in Chaucer's time.

Ver. 3934. 'A market-beter:' One that makes quarrels in markets, says the Glossary. But, according to Mr. Upton, Pref. to 'Observ. on Shaksp.' p. xx, 'A market-beter is one who raises the price of the market. "To beat the fire" Chaucer uses in the Knight's tale (vers. 2255, 2294) for "to rouse, to stir up." Though this explanation of Mr Upton's be not quite satisfactory, I think it far preferable to the other.

Ver. 3939. 'Deinous Simekin:' His name was Simon, (vers. 4020, 4024), of which 'Simekin' is the diminutive; and from his disdainful, insolent manners, he had acquired the surname of 'Deinous,' just as Nicholas, in the former tale (ver. 3199) 'was cleped Hendy,' from the very opposite behaviour. A great number of our surnames have been derived from qualities of the mind; and it is reasonable to suppose that at the beginning they were merely personal, like what we call nicknames. It is probable that the use of hereditary surnames was not, even in Chaucer's time, fully established among the lower classes of people.

Ver. 3988. 'The Soler hall:' This is the true reading. It means 'the hall with the soler.' Before the students in our universities were incorporated, they lived in lodging-houses, called inns, halls, and hostels, which were often distinguished by names taken from some peculiarity in their construction. One at Cambridge was called 'Tyled Ostle.' (Parker's 'Scel. Cantab. ap. Lel. Collect.', t. v. p. 189.) And at Oxford, Oriel College probably derives its name from a large messuage, vulgarly known by the name of 'Le Oriole,' upon the site of which it stands. (Ayliffe's 'Hist.', v. i. p. 287.) An 'oriel,' or 'eriol,' was a porch (Du Cange, in v. *Oriolum*;) as a 'soler' seems originally to have signified an open 'gallery,' or 'balcony,' at the top of the house; though latterly it has been used for any upper

room, loft, or garret. (Idem, in v. Solarium, Watts, Gloss. ad Mat. Par;) Froissart, v. i. c. 234 :—‘Les femmes de la ville monterent en leurs logis et en solliers.’ In the description of Cambridge above cited, p. 188, there is mentioned a ‘garrestoste.’ Mr Warton strongly confirms this reading. (‘Hist. of Eng. Po.,’ p. 432, note n.)

Ver. 4012. ‘Strother:’ I cannot find any place of this name in England; there is a Struthers, or Strauther, in the shire of Fife.

Ver. 4021. ‘How fares:’ It may be observed, that Chaucer has given his northern clerks a northern dialect. I will just point out a few particulars in which their language differs from that used in the rest of his work :—

1. They terminate the third person singular, and the whole plural number of their verbs, in ‘es,’ instead of ‘eth,’ or ‘en.’ So, in the present instance, we have ‘fares;’ and in the lines immediately following ‘has,’ ‘behoves,’ ‘has,’ ‘werkes,’ ‘gas,’ ‘wagges,’ ‘falles.’

2. They use ‘a’ in a great number of words which Chaucer in other places writes with ‘o’—as ‘swa’ for so; ‘hame’ for ‘home;’ ‘fra’ for ‘fro;’ vers. 4071, 4072, ‘banes’ and ‘anes,’ for ‘bones’ and ‘ones,’ &c. That this was the northern practice appears from the following note (‘Hist. Abbat. Pipewell. Monast. Ang.,’ v. i. p. 816) :—‘Et sciendum quod Monachi boreales scripserunt in cartis nostris Rahage, pro Rohawe.’

3. Many of their words are of the obsolete Saxon form; as, ver. 4031, ‘henen’ for ‘hennes;’ ver. 4076, ‘whilke’ for ‘whiche;’ ver. 4083, ‘alswa’ for ‘also;’ ver. 4128, ‘slike,’ from ‘swilke,’ instead of ‘swiche;’ ver. 4130, ‘gar’ for ‘make,’ or ‘let,’ &c.

4. If I am not mistaken, he has designedly given them a vulgar, ungrammatical phraseology. I do not remember in any other part of his writings such a line as, ver. 4043 :—

‘I is as ill a miller as is ye.’

See also ver. 4084, ‘I is;’ ver. 4087, ‘Thou is.’

Ver. 4027. ‘I hope:’ I expect. It signifies the mere expectation of a future event, whether good or evil, as ‘*ελπίζω*,’ Gr., and ‘spero,’ Lat., often do. So in Shakspeare (‘Ant. and Cl.’) :—

‘I cannot *hope*
Cæsar and Anthony shall well greet together.’

Ver. 4038. ‘Answered:’ Sax. ‘*andswarode*’ is a compound word of ‘*and*,’ *contra*, and ‘*swaran*;’ which, in the Icelandic, signifies ‘*dicere*.’ Barthol., ‘Ant. Dan.,’ p. 690, ‘*Thorbiorg svarar. Thorbiorga dicit.*’ This etymology accounts for its being accented upon the middle syllable—‘*answéred*.’ (See ver. 4126.)

Ver. 4053. ‘To the wolf thus spake the mare:’ The story alluded to is told of a mule, in ‘Cent. Nov. Ant,’ n. 91. The mule pretends that his name is written upon the bottom of his hind-foot. The wolf attempting to read it, the mule gives him a kick on the forehead and kills him. Upon this the fox, who was present, observes, ‘*Ogni huomo, che sa lettera, non è savio.*’ There is a similar story of a wolf and a mare, in ‘The Most Delectable History of Reynard the Fox.,’ edit. 1702, ch. xviii.; but whether that story be in Caxton’s edition; whether it be in the Dutch book from which Caxton translated; whether the Dutch book be an original composition or a translation; when it was written, &c., are all points upon which I wish to be informed by some more knowing antiquary. I will just observe, that one of the fox’s tricks (ch. xiv.) seems to be alluded to by Richal de Berbeiffel (‘Richard de Berbezieux’) a Provençal poet, who died in 1383. (‘*Quadrio*,’ t. ii. p. 144.) I will cite the passage from MS. Crofts, fol. exci., though I do not understand the last clause:—

‘Anc Ranart d’Isengrin
Tan gen no sap venjar,
Qan lo fiz escorzar,
Ell dit per eschernir
Chapels et gan Com eu faz no mair.’

Reynard here seems to have procured Isengrim’s skin to be stript off, to make him ‘a hood and gloves.’ In the English, he procures the wolf’s shoes to be pulled off and put upon his own feet.

Ver. 4059. ‘A *levesell*:’ This word is plainly derived from the Saxon ‘*lefe*,’ *folium*, and ‘*setl*,’ *sedes*. ‘*Metefel*’ is a word of the same form. ‘Peter of Langt.,’ p. 334—‘It neghed nere metesel’—It was near the time of sitting down to dinner. A ‘*levesel*,’ therefore, signifies a ‘leafy seat,’ an ‘arbour.’ It may be understood in the same sense in the Parson’s

tale,*—‘right as the gay levesell at the taverne is signe of the win that is in the cellar.’

Ver. 4094. ‘Make a clerk’s beard :’ *i. e.*, Cheat him ‘Faire la barbe,’ Fr., is to shave or trim the beard; but Chaucer translates the phrase literally, at least when he uses it in its metaphorical sense (See ver. 5943, and ‘H. of F.,’ ii. 181.) Boccaccio has the same metaphor. (‘Decam.,’ viii. 10.) Speaking of some exorbitant cheats, he says that they applied themselves ‘non a radere ma a scorticare huomini ;’ and a little lower—‘si a soavemente la barbiera saputo menare il rasoio.’

Ver. 4138. ‘Chalons :’ Whatever they were, they probably were so called from their being made at Chalons. The Glossary interprets them to be ‘blankets;’ but a passage in the ‘Monast.,’ v. ii. p. 720, would rather lead one to suppose them ‘coverlets’—‘aut pannos pictos, qui vocantur Chaluns, loco lectisternii.’

Ver. 4206. ‘A cokenay :’ That this is a term of contempt, borrowed originally from the kitchen, is very probable. A cook, in the base Latinity, was called ‘coquinator,’ and ‘coquinarius,’ from either of which ‘cokenay’ might easily be derived. In ‘P. P.,’ fol. xxxv. b :—

‘And yet I say by my soule I have no salt bacon,
Ne no cokeney, by Christe, coloppes to make.’

It seems to signify a ‘cook.’ And so, perhaps, in the ‘Turnament of Tottenham,’ (‘Anc. Poet.,’ t. ii. p. 24):—

‘At that feast were they served in rich array ;
Every five and five had a cokeney.’

That is, I suppose, a cook, or scullion, to attend them.

In those rhymes ascribed to Hugh Bigot, which Camden has published, (Brit. col. 451)—upon what authority, I know not :—

‘Were I in my castle of Bungey
Upon the river of Waveney,
I would ne care for the king of Cockeney.’

The author, in calling London ‘cockeney,’ might possibly allude to that imaginary country of idleness and luxury, which as anciently known by the name of ‘Cokaigne,’ or ‘Cocagne;’ a name which Hickes has shewn to be derived from ‘Coquina,’ (‘Gr. A. S.,’ p. 231.) He has there published an excellent de-

* This tale will appear in the third volume.

scription of the ‘country of Cokaigne,’ in old English verse, but probably translated from the French. At least the French have had the same fable among them, for Boileau plainly alludes to it (Sat. vi.) :—

‘Paris est pour un riche un pais de Cocagne.’

The festival of ‘La Cocagna,’ at Naples, described by Keysler (v. ii. p. 369), appears to have the same foundation. It probably commenced under the Norman government. There is a mock-heroic poem, in the Sicilian dialect, entitled ‘La Cuccagna Conquistata,’ by Gio. Battista Basilì, Palerm., 1674, in which the description of ‘l’alma città di Cuccagna’ begins thus :—

‘Sedi Cuccagna sutt’ una montagna
Di furmaggiu grattatu, et havi in cima
Di maccaruni una caudara magna.’

Ver. 4318. ‘Him thar not :’ I have restored this old word, upon the authority of the best MSS., in this and other places. (See vers. 5911, 5918, 6947, 17,301.) It is derived from the Saxon, ‘thearfian,’ *necesse habere*; and is generally used as an impersonal. ‘Him behoveth not to winne, or acquire good, that doth evil.’ I have ventured to substitute ‘winne,’ instead of the common reading, ‘wene,’ of which I could make no sense. MS. B. δ. reads, ‘He may nought wilne w.’

Ver. 4345. ‘A Jack of Dover :’ The general purport of this phrase is sufficiently explained in the following line; but the particular meaning I have not been able to investigate.

Ver. 4348. ‘Of thy parsly :’ An old ‘Boke of Kokery,’ which I have consulted upon this occasion (MS. Harl., 4016), has a recipe for ‘gose or capon farced,’ but it does not mention ‘parsly.’ It only says in general terms —‘Take yolkes of eyeron (egges), hard ysodde, and hew him smale, with the herbes —and caste thereto pouder of ginger, pepper, canell, and salt, and grapes, in tyme of yere.’ I have lately met with another, I suppose the true recipe for stuffing a goose, in MS. Harl., 279. It begins—‘Take percely and swynis grece, or sewet of a shepe, and parboyle hem,’ &c.

Ver. 4355. ‘Sooth play quade spel :’ As this is said to have been a Flemish proverb, I have inserted ‘spel’ from MSS. Ask., 1, 2, instead of the common reading ‘play.’ ‘Spel,’ in Teut.,

is ‘ludus,’ as ‘quade,’ or ‘quaed,’ is ‘malus.’ Sir John Harrington, in his ‘Apologie of Poetrie,’ quotes an old saying of the same import—‘Soth bourde is no bourde.’

Ver. 4375. ‘Riding—in Cheap:’ There were sometimes justs in Cheapside. (‘Hollings,’ v. ii. p. 348.) But, perhaps, any procession may be meant. MSS. Ask., 1, 2, read ‘revel.’

Ver. 4377. ‘And till:’ ‘And’ is added.

Ver. 4394. ‘They play:’ So MS. C.; all the rest read ‘he.’

Ver. 4413. ‘A louke:’ A receiver to a thief, (Sp. Sk.) This explanation, I believe, is a mere fancy, but I have nothing better to propose.

Ver. 4421. ‘Our Host saw well:’ Concerning the time of day meant to be pointed out in the following lines, see the ‘Discourse,’ &c., §. V.

Ver. 4450. ‘Malkin’s maidenhead:’ A common phrase. (‘P. P.,’ fol. vii. a. b:)—

‘Ye have no more merit of masse ne of houres
Than Malkin of hire maydenhead, that no man desireth.’

Ver. 4467. ‘But Chaucer:’ So MSS. C. 1, Ask. 1, 2. In the Editt. it had been strangely corrupted into ‘that.’

Ver. 4477. ‘In youth he made of Ceyx:’ The story of Ceyx and Alcyone is related in the introduction to the poem, which was for some time called ‘The Dreme of Chaucer,’ but which, in the MSS. Fairf., 16, and Bod., 638, is more properly entitled ‘The Booke of the Duchesse.’ The following note, which has been prefixed to it in all the later editions, is in MS. Fairf., in the handwriting of John Stowe:—‘By the person of a mourning knight sitting under an oke is meant John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, greatly lamenting the death of one whom hee entirely loved, supposed to be Blanche the Duchesse.’ I believe John is very right in his conjecture. Chaucer himself, in his ‘Leg. of G. W.,’ 418, says that he made ‘The Death of Blauncle the Duchesse;’ and in the poem now under consideration, he plainly alludes to her name, (ver. 948):—

‘And faire white she hete;
That was my ladys name right.’

On the other hand, the knight is represented, (vers. 455, 456,) —

'Of the age of four and twenty yere,
Upon his berde but litel here ;'

whereas John of Gaunt, at the death of Blanche, in 1369, was about nine and twenty years of age. But this, perhaps, was a designed misrepresentation.

I will just observe, that the manner in which Chaucer speaks of his own age at the time of this composition, is a confirmation of what has been suggested in the 'Discourse,' &c., note * p. ciii., that 'The Canterbury Tales' were the work of his latest years. When the Duchess Blanche died, he was one-and-forty; a time of life which I believe a man seldom calls his youth, till he is advanced at least twenty years beyond it.

Ver. 4481. 'The Saintes legend of Cupid :' In the Editt. it is called 'The Legende of Good Women ;' in MS. Fairf., 16, 'The Legendis of ix Gode Women.' According to Lydgate, 'Prol. to Boccaccio,' the number was to have been nineteen; and perhaps the 'Legende' itself affords some ground for this notion. (See ver. 183; and 'C. L.', ver. 108.) But this number was probably never completed, and the last story of Hypermnestra is seemingly unfinished.

In an imperfect copy of the 'Master of the Game,' dedicated to Henry, eldest son of Henry IV., (MS. Harl. 6824,) is the following passage:—'As Chaucer seithe, in his prolog. of xxv. good wymmen, by writing have men mynde of thynges passed.' (See ver. 18.)

In this passage the Man of Law omits two ladies, viz., Cleopatra and Philomela, whose histories are in the 'Legende'; and he enumerates eight others, of whom there are no histories in the 'Legende,' as we have it at present. Are we to suppose that they have been lost?

With respect to the time of Chaucer's writing the 'Legende,' see the 'Discourse,' &c., note * p. ciii.

Ver. 4486. 'The plaint of Dejanire.' This reading is supported by several MSS. of middling authority; but the better copies read 'Diane,' and MS. A., 'Syane.' There is a nymph 'Cyane' in Ovid 'Metam.' l. v., who weeps herself into a fountain; but not for love.

Ver. 4512. 'To Muses, that men clepe Pierides :' He rather

means, I think, the daughters of Pierus, who contended with the Muses, and were changed into pies. (Ovid, 'Metam.' l. v.)

Ver. 4515. 'With hawebake:' So MS. A. The other readings are—'Hawe i bake' (MSS. Ask., 1, 2); 'hawke bake' (B. *β.*); 'hevy bake' (B. *e. i.*); 'have wee bauke' (E.); 'have we bake' (B. *δ.* HA.); 'hawe ybake' (Ca. 2.); 'the whiche hath no lak.' (Ca. 1.) The reader may take his choice of them.

Ver. 4534. 'Bet is to dien:' This saying of Solomon is quoted in 'Rom. de la Ro.', 8573:—'Mieux vault mourir que pauvres estre.'

Ver. 4617. 'In starres:' This passage is imitated from the 'Megacosmus' of Bernardus Sylvestris, an eminent philosopher and poet about the middle of the twelfth century. (Fabric., 'Bibl. Med. Ætat,' in v. Bernardus Carnotensis et Sylvestris. I will transcribe here the original lines from MS. Bod., 1265:—

'Præjacet in stellis series, quam longior ætas
 Explicit et spatiis temporis ordo suis,
Sceptra Phoronei, fratrum discordia Thebis,
 Flamma Phaëthonis, Deucalionis aquæ.
In stellis Codri paupertas, copia Croesi,
 Incestus Paridis Hippolytique pudor.
In stellis Priami species, audacia Turni,
 Sensus Ulyzeus, Herculeusque vigor.
In stellis pugil est Pollux et navita Typhis
 Et Cicero rhetor et geometra Thales.
In stellis lepidum dictat Maro, Milo figurat,
 Fulgorat in Latia nobilitate Nero.
Astra notat Persis, Ægyptus parturit artes,
 Græcia docta legit, prælia Roma gerit.'

The four lines in Italics are quoted in the margin of MS. C. 1.

Ver. 4709. 'Or Ilion burnt:' There is great confusion among the MSS. in this line. I have made the best sense that I could, without departing too far from them. MS. A. reads—

'Or whanne Ilion brende Thebes the citee,
which might lead one to conjecture—

'Or whanne Philip brende Thebes the citee.'

This last phrase is French. See Froissart, v. i. c. 225—'Dedans Rénes la cité et environ.'

Ver. 4725. 'O Mars, O Atyzar:' So MS. A. Other MSS.

read, ‘Athusir,’ ‘Atayzer,’ ‘Attezer,’ ‘Atazir.’ I am not astrologer enough to determine which is the right word. ‘Atizar,’ Span., and ‘attiser,’ Fr., signify ‘to light a fire,’ ‘to inflame.’ But whether that sense can have any place here, I am doubtful.

Ver. 4732. ‘Is there none election?’ In the margin of MS. C. 1, is the following quotation:—‘Omnes concordati sunt, quod electiones sint debiles, nisi in divitibus: habent enim isti, licet debilitentur eorum electiones, radicem, i. nativitates eorum, quæ confortat omnem planetam debilem in itinere,’ &c. It is taken from ‘Liber Electionum,’ by one Zael. (MS. Harl., 80; Bod., 1648.)

Ver. 4841. ‘O sudden woe?’ I shall transcribe the following passage from the margin of MS. C. 1—though I know not from what author it is borrowed—as it confirms the readings adopted in the text:—‘Semper mundanæ lætitiae tristitia repentina succedit. Mundana igitur felicitas multis amaritudinibus est respersa. Extrema gaudii luctus occupat. Audi ergo salubre consilium; in die bonorum ne immemor sis malorum.’ The Editt. read—‘O soudan, wo,’ &c.

Ver. 4858. ‘Foot-hot.’ Hastily, with all expedition. See Gower, ‘Conf. Am.,’ f. 816:—

‘And forth with all anone fote hote
He stale the cowe.’

See also ‘R. R.,’ 3827. *Haut le pied*, in French, has the same signification. (Cotgrave, in v.) So that I should suspect ‘hot,’ in our phrase, to be a corruption of ‘haut.’

Ver. 5002. The following plot of the Knight against Constance, from this ver. to ver. 5030, and also her adventure with the Steward, from ver. 5330 to ver. 5344, are both to be found, with some small variations, in a story in the ‘Gesta Romanorum,’ ch. 101. (MS. Harl., 2270.) Occleve has verified the whole story, as he has another from the same collection, ‘De Johnatha et Muliere Malâ,’ ch. 64, Ibid. (cxx. Edit.) See an excellent MS. of Occleve’s works, ‘Bib. Reg.,’ 17 D. vi. The first poem begins—‘In the Romain jestes written is thus:’ the second—‘Some time an emperour prudent and wise.’

Ver. 5004. ‘How he might quite her while:’ Her time, labour,

&c. So in the ‘Leg. of Ariadne,’ v. ult., ‘the devil quite him his while.’

Ver. 5191. ‘O messenger:’ ‘Quid turpius ebrioso, cui fætor in ore, tremor in corpore; qui promit stulta, prodit occulta; cui mens alienatur, facies transformatur? nullum enim latet secretum ubi regnat ebrietas.’ (Marg. C. 1.)

Ver. 5345. ‘O foul lust:’ ‘O extrema libidinis turpitudo, quæ non solum mentem effeminat, set etiam corpus enervat; semper secuntur dolor et poenitentia post,’ &c. (Marg. C. 1.)

Ver. 5506. ‘Some men would sayn:’ See Gower, ‘Conf. Am.,’ B. ii. fol. 35, b. 11, and the ‘Discourse,’ &c., § XV.

In another circumstance, which has been introduced with the same words, (ver. 5429,) our author agrees with Gower, *ibid*, fol. 35, a. 1.

Ver. 5527. ‘Your Custance:’ I have added ‘your’ for the sake of the metre.

Ver. 5552. ‘But little while:’ In Marg. C. 1:—‘A mane usque ad vesperam mutabitur tempus, tenent tympanum et gaudent ad sonum organi,’ &c.

Ver. 5555. ‘Who lived ever:’ *Ibid*:—‘Quis unquam unicam diem totam in sua dilectione duxit jocundam? quem in aliqua parte diei reatus conscientiæ, viz., impetus iræ, vel motus concupiscentiæ non turbavit; quem livor, vel ardor avaritiæ, vel tumor superbiciæ non vexavit, quem aliqua jactura, vel offensa, vel passio non commoverit,’ &c.

END OF VOL. I.









